FINANCIAL HEALTH NETWORK

Research Paper

FinHealth Spend Report 2025

Spending Growth Slows, but Pressure Persists for Vulnerable Households

October 2025

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Acknowledgments

We are thankful for the sizable contributions and guidance of MK Falgout and Necati Celik, as well as ongoing support and collaboration from Lisa Berdie and Andrew Warren. We also appreciate the strategic guidance and leadership of David Silberman, Marisa Walster, and Taylor C. Nelms, and the valuable input of many of our other colleagues, including Sarah Gordon, Dan Miller, Cat New, Chris Vo, and Elvis Diaz.

This report benefits from insights and market intelligence from experts across the financial services industry, including Bankrate, New York State Department of Financial Services, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and Student Borrower Protection Center (SBPC).

This report is made possible through the financial support of Prudential Financial.

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About This Report

What's New in the 2025 Report

For more than a decade, the FinHealth Spend Report has analyzed the cost of financial services for American households, particularly those struggling financially. In 2020, we debuted a new approach that blends extensive secondary research on financial products and trends with a nationally representative survey on financial service use. This report is the fifth annual publication under this revised methodology, providing insights into multi-year trends and shifts.

Each year, we review and update our sources and product mix to ensure our report remains reliable and relevant. In this year's report, we present data on product spending and usage over three years (2022-2024), with longer time horizons presented for some products. We have updated prior estimates to include the most recent data available for those years. Appendix II has additional details about shifts in approach and adjustments to survey wording.

While we continue to report household incidence and estimated revenues for dozens of products, this year's report features deeper, more focused analyses on a select number of key topics, including:

- Bank account ownership
- Deposit account fees, including overdraft/non-sufficient funds (NSF) fees
- Credit card debt
- Buy now, pay later (BNPL)
- Student loans

These spotlights include our first-ever analyses of topics such as:

- How many checking accounts households have, and the types of institutions they use
- Types of credit card fees
- Student loan payment difficulty and coping strategies

In addition to this annual report, the FinHealth Spend initiative produces supplemental analyses that explore critical or emerging topics. Our most recent brief, "Overdraft, NSF Fees Bigger Burden Than Previously Estimated," was released in March 2025. We anticipate publishing additional analyses throughout the year, including an upcoming brief on mobile payment services (such as PayPal, Venmo, and Cash App). We welcome suggestions and partnership on additional areas of exploration to bring new research to life.

Methodology in Brief

Our report leverages a unique multi-phase methodology that begins with in-depth secondary research and modeling to derive estimates of total spending on interest and fees by American households across dozens of financial products and services. This research is coupled with nationally representative survey data on household product use and outstanding debt over the previous 12 months. Pairing secondary analysis on spending with our survey data provides unique insight into how consumers navigate and utilize financial services. Our approach involves:

- **Extensive research on market size, fees and interest, and growth projections for dozens of financial products and services** using publicly available secondary research and input from industry experts (see Table 1). Wherever available, we use regular, vetted information, such as public filings or official government datasets. All fee and interest figures require some degree of estimation. In Appendix II, we disclose our sources and the level of confidence in the accuracy of our estimates. We encourage feedback on how we can continue to enhance our analyses in the future.
- **A probability-based nationally representative survey to understand household usage of a variety of financial products**, including frequency and balances for select products. Table 2 below shows the field dates, response rates, sample sizes, and margins of error for the survey data used. Each year's sample is weighted to align the sample distributions of race, ethnicity, gender, age, education, and Census region with the population distributions using the Current Population Survey benchmarks.[1] For more details on this year's survey, please see Appendix II.
- We utilize our **secondary research to estimate national spending** on each financial product and leverage our **survey data to allocate spending among different demographic groups**.

[1] For details on USC's sampling and weighting methodology, please see "Welcome to the Understanding America Study," USC Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research.

Table 1. Products analyzed.

Transaction and deposit services	Includes fees incurred to utilize a variety of services that facilitate transactions or are associated with bank accounts, including: • Deposit account fees, such as overdraft/NSF fees, account maintenance fees, and ATM fees • Financial transaction services, including international remittances, nonbank check cashing, and money orders • Prepaid cards, such as payroll, government, and general purpose reloadable cards
Credit services	Includes fees and interest on most non-mortgage consumer credit, such as: • General purpose and private label credit card revolving accounts • Secured credit cards • Auto loans and leases, including new, used, and buy here, pay here (BHPH) loans • Federal and private student loans • Unsecured installment loans • Alternative credit products, including pawn loans, rent-to-own, title loans, payday loans, and refund anticipation checks and loans

Table 2. Survey details.

Year	Field dates	Cooperation rate*	Sample size	Margin of error
2023	Jan 5 - 30	73%	5,055	1.4%
2024	Jan 3 - Feb 3	79%	5,509	1.3%
2025	Jan 8 - Feb 5	73%	5,216	1.4%

* Notes: Conditional on participating in the Understanding America Study (UAS) panel. Cooperation rate is calculated as the number of panelists who started the survey, divided by the number of panelists invited.

Defining Usage by Household

This study utilizes the household as the primary unit of measurement. All survey respondents self-identified as the primary or co-decision-maker on household financial matters. For person-level characteristics, such as race and ethnicity, we use the characteristics of the respondent to represent the household.[2]

[2] This approach is commonly utilized among governmental sources, such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's (FDIC) "2023 FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households" from November 2024.

What Is Financial Health?

Defining Financial Health

Financial health is a holistic framework by which to understand financial lives. Financial health comes about when households are financially resilient in the face of setbacks and have the resources to pursue opportunities and thrive.

Measuring Financial Health With the FinHealth Score®

Based on this definition of financial health, the Financial Health Network developed the FinHealth Score®. The FinHealth Score is a composite measure of eight indicators that represent the four pillars of financial health – Spend, Save, Borrow, and Plan – and is designed to provide insight into specific aspects of financial lives (Figure 1).

Figure 1. 8 indicators of financial health.

The indicators are constructed based on responses to eight financial health survey questions. A numerical value is assigned to each of the possible responses of the eight financial health survey questions. For individuals who responded to all eight questions, we can calculate their FinHealth Score, which ranges from 0 to 100, by averaging their responses to the eight financial health survey questions.[3] Those with scores between 0 and 39 are considered "Financially Vulnerable," consumers with scores ranging between 40 and 79 are defined as "Financially Coping," and those with scores of 80 to 100 are "Financially Healthy" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Interpreting the FinHealth Score.

[3] Please see the FinHealth Score methodology webpage for more information on how the Score was designed.

Executive Summary

This year's FinHealth Spend Report examines how American households engaged with the financial services system during 2024, a year marked by both economic moderation and underlying unease. Inflation continued to cool in 2024, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rising 2.9% in the 12 months leading up to December – down from 3.4% in 2023 and 6.5% in 2022.[4] Meanwhile, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by nearly 3%, reflecting increases in consumer spending and investment.[5]

Yet after years of elevated inflation, rising costs of living, and the end of pandemic-era government support, discontent lingered. The Financial Health Pulse® 2025 U.S. Trends Report found that despite some small, short-term gains in financial health, there were also signs of underlying consumer unease.[6] Similarly, the Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Household Economics and Decisionmaking found that while household financial well-being remained fairly stable compared with two years prior, concerns over prices persisted.[7] According to the Pew Research Center, relatively few people felt the economy was strong.[8,9]

Our survey data for this year's FinHealth Spend Report were collected at a pivotal moment – during the final weeks of the Biden administration and the earliest days of the Trump administration in January 2025. Combined with secondary data, this report provides insight into household use of financial services at the turning point between two presidential administrations with vastly different approaches to the economy.

Against this backdrop, we find that:

- **Fees and interest on non-mortgage financial services continued to grow**, albeit at a more moderate pace than the year prior. Estimated fees and interest in 2024 increased nearly $40 billion from 2023, reaching an estimated $455 billion (see Figure ES1).[10]
- **Spending on credit products and services** continued to drive overall spending growth. This category includes auto loans, unsecured installment loans, student loans, alternative financial services, and revolving credit card balances. Credit spending rose 11% year over year to

[4] "Consumer Price Index: 2024 in review," U.S. Bureau of Labor Services, January 2025.

[5] "Gross Domestic Product, 4th Quarter and Year 2024 (Third Estimate), GDP by Industry, and Corporate Profits," Bureau of Economic Analysis, March 2025.

[6] Andrew Warren, Shira Hammerslough, Wanjira Chege, & Taylor C. Nelms, "Financial Health Pulse® 2025 U.S. Trends Report," September 2025.

[7] "Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2024," Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, May 2025.

[8] "Public's Positive Economic Ratings Slip; Inflation Still Widely Viewed as Major Problem," Pew Research Center, May 2024.

[9] Gary Langer, "Exit polls 2024: Deep economic discontent with Biden drove voters to Trump," ABC News, November 2024.

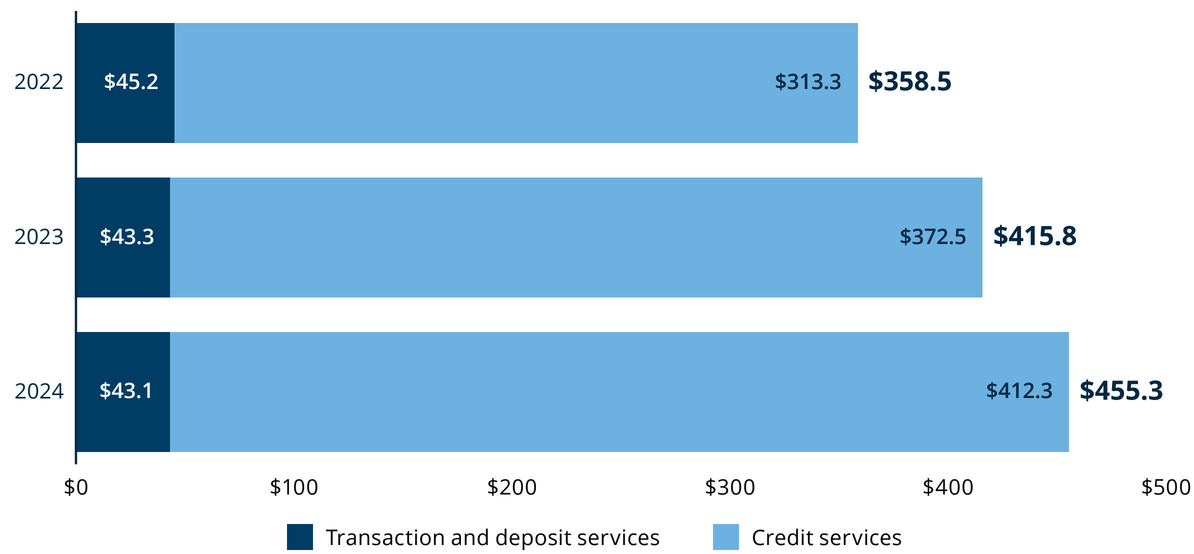
[10] The 2024 FinHealth Spend Report reported total interest and fees of $415 billion in 2023 and $354 billion in 2022. After adjusting several estimates based on new data availability and updated methodologies, our estimate for 2023 is now $416 billion, while 2022 is estimated at $358 billion.

$412 billion, after a nearly 20% jump the year prior.[11] This growth was largely due to increased interest and fees from revolving credit card balances, as well as expansion in federal student loan payments following the end of loan forbearance.

- Despite ongoing innovation across the financial services landscape, **we continued to see persistent and dramatic disparities in the share of income spent on interest and fees for financial services** – particularly among populations who have been traditionally underserved or are facing financial health challenges.
  - **Financially Vulnerable households** spent 17% of their income on interest and fees alone in 2024, compared with 1% among Financially Healthy households.
  - **Black and Latine households** spent greater amounts – both as a percentage of income and in absolute terms – on financial services than white households.
  - **Households with subprime credit** carried greater balances for longer at higher rates, contributing 14% of household income toward financial services, compared with 2% among households with prime credit.[12,13]

Figure ES1. Consumer spending on total interest and fees jumped nearly $100 billion in two years, reaching an estimated $455 billion in 2024.

Total estimated spending on interest and fees, in billions, 2022-2024.



[11] We estimate interest and fees (such as annual fees or late fees) only for cardholders who carry a balance for at least one month of the year by multiplying the total dollar amount of revolving balances by an estimated cost (expressed as a percentage of those balances). For more details, see Appendix II.

[12] For example, the CFPB reports that consumers with subprime credit experience higher rates of persistent credit card debt, defined as when interest and fees exceed half of total payments made in a calendar year, reflecting their greater difficulty in paying down balances quickly. See "The Consumer Credit Card Market," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, October 2023.

[13] In the FinHealth Spend survey, we ask respondents the following question: "How would you rate your credit score? Your credit score is a number that tells lenders how risky or safe you are as a borrower." Respondents who answer "Excellent" or "Very good" are coded as prime, "Good" is coded as nonprime, and "Fair," "Poor," and "Don't know" are coded as subprime. We group "Don't know" responses into the subprime category because uncertainty about one's credit score likely signals limited credit engagement or history. In this year's survey, 4% of respondents answered "Don't know." As a follow-up, we asked this group (N = 132), "Do you have a credit score?" to which, 21% responded "No" and 62% responded "Don't know."

Key Product Trends

Account Ownership

Many banked households hold checking accounts across multiple institutions, presenting potential challenges for institutions seeking to establish primacy

- For the first time, we collected data on the number and types of checking accounts households hold.
- Among households with at least one checking account, more than half (55%) reported holding more than one household checking account, and most (69%) said these accounts were spread across multiple institutions.
- Many households spread their accounts across multiple *types* of institutions – for example, a traditional bank and a credit union, or a traditional bank and an online bank. Roughly 1 in 5 banked households reported holding accounts at more than one type of institution.

Some households who appear "unbanked" may be using alternatives that replicate traditional banking services

- Only 5% of respondents were "unbanked" (that is, they reported that no one in their household had a checking or savings account in 2024).
- However, nearly a quarter (23%) of this group indicated that they had an account with an online bank with no physical branch locations, raising questions about what it really means to be "unbanked."

Deposit Account Fees

Overdraft/non-sufficient funds (NSF) fees rose slightly, offset by other fees

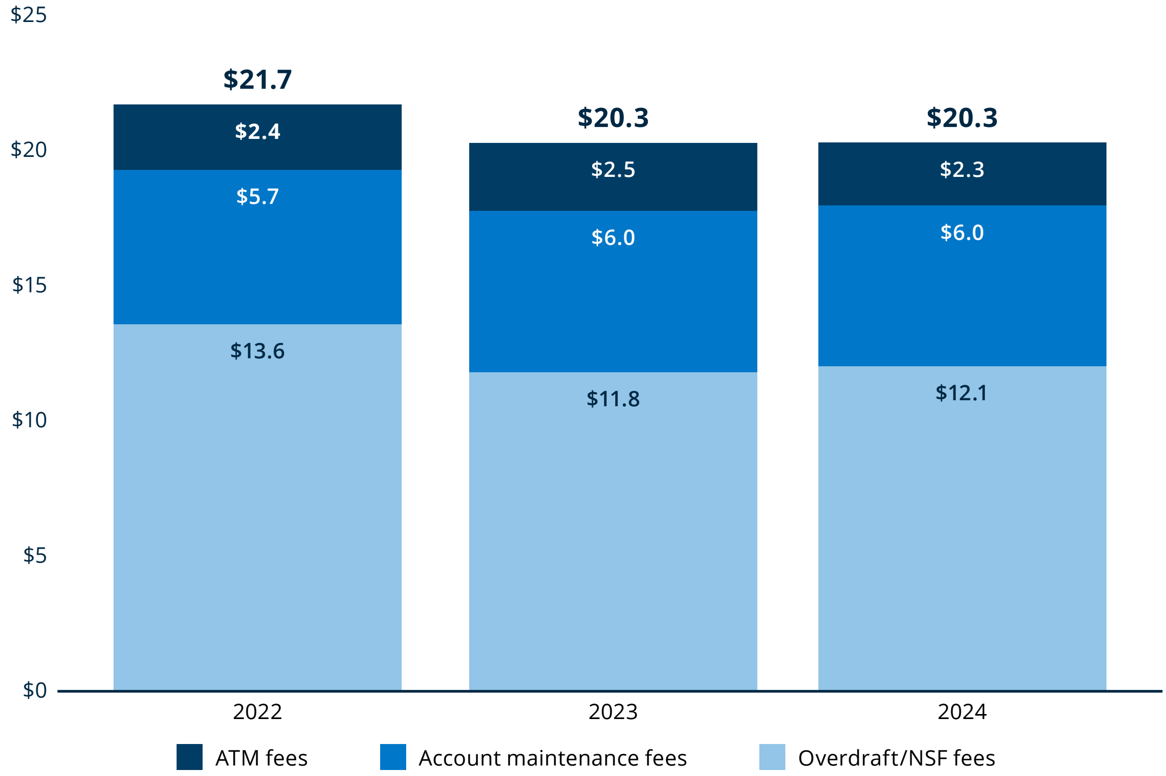
- Estimated deposit account fees – including account maintenance fees, ATM fees, and overdraft/NSF fees – were flat in 2024 at $20.3 billion (see Figure ES2).
- After several years of decline, overdraft/NSF fees are estimated to have grown slightly in 2024 compared to 2023 (from $11.8 billion to $12.1 billion), while account maintenance fees held steady and ATM fee revenues declined slightly.

Credit union users who overdraft reported doing so more frequently than bank users who overdraft

- Our March 2025 overdraft analysis found that credit unions generated a far greater share of overall overdraft/NSF revenue than previously recognized.[14]
- Our new survey data show that while the share of households who overdrafted was similar between credit union and bank account holders, credit union overdrafters reported incurring higher numbers of overdraft/NSF fees over 12 months. Twenty-one percent of respondents who reported overdrafting only at a credit union reported six or more overdrafts, compared with 14% among those with bank overdrafts.[15]

Figure ES2. Estimated deposit account fees (from account maintenance, ATM, and overdraft/NSF) were flat in 2024.

Estimated fees in billions, by type and year.



Notes: Estimates include fee revenue for banks and credit unions. The above categories do not represent a comprehensive list of all possible fees associated with deposit accounts, but reflect those detailed in the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) Call Reports.

[14] Hannah Gdalman, MK Falgout, & David Silberman, "Overdraft, NSF Fees Bigger Burden Than Previously Estimated," Financial Health Network, March 2025.

[15] Among respondents who indicated that they only overdrafted with a credit union (N = 152), versus only overdrafted with a bank (N = 430). Excludes responses from households who said they had overdrafts at multiple different types of institutions, at other types of institutions, or those who did not know the institution type.

Cryptocurrency

The share of households owning crypto remained lower than 2022

- Nine percent of households reported holding cryptocurrency in 2024. This figure is similar to the 8% of households holding crypto in 2023, but lower than the 11% who owned it in 2022.
- Consistent with prior years, we find that higher-earning households hold crypto at higher rates. In 2024, 16% of households earning more than $100,000 held cryptocurrency, compared with just 3% of those earning less than $30,000.

Credit Cards

Fees and interest on credit cards continued to grow, though at a more moderate pace than the prior year

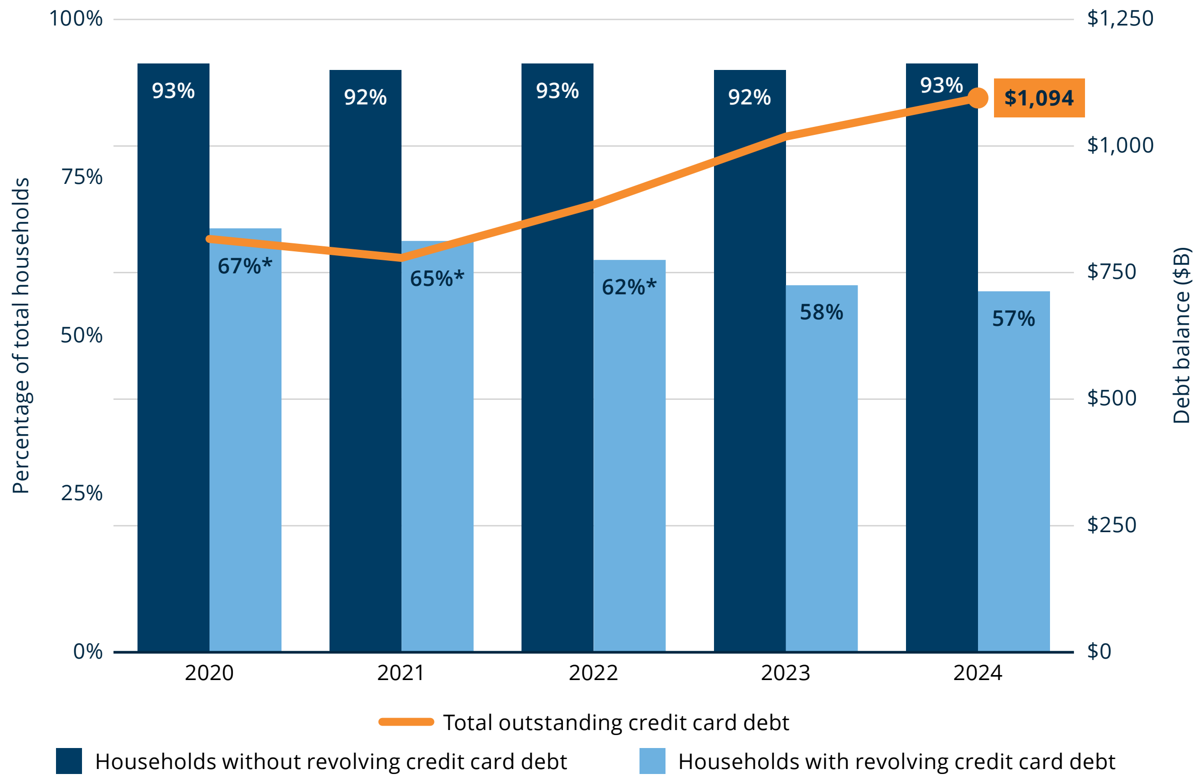
- Fees and interest assessed on general purpose card balances grew to $165.1 billion, up 10% from $149.7 billion in 2023. This growth has moderated from the 25% year-over-year growth the year prior.
- Fees paid by households who carried a balance were estimated at $25.8 billion, or 16% of the total.
- Private label spending stayed roughly steady, with an estimated $15.4 billion in interest and fees from revolving balances in 2024.

Self-reported manageability of debt has declined among credit card revolvers

- A five-year analysis suggests an erosion of self-reported credit manageability among households who carry credit card debt (see Figure ES3).

Figure ES3. Manageability of debt has declined among households with revolving credit card debt.

Self-reported manageability of debt, by credit card revolvership, 2020-2024.



Notes: Bar chart (left axis) shows the percentage of cardholder households who reported they "have a manageable amount of debt" or "do not have any debt" over time. Households with revolving credit card debt are those who carried a balance for at least one month of the year on general purpose or private label credit cards (N = 1,673 in 2020, N = 2,024 in 2021, N = 2,006 in 2022, N = 2,150 in 2023, and N = 1,933 in 2024), and those without are households who did not carry a balance (N = 1,523 in 2020, N = 2,057 in 2021, N = 2,149 in 2022, N = 2,413 in 2023, and N = 2,308 in 2024). Line graph (right axis) represents total outstanding credit card debt: the sum of average annual balances for general purpose bank cards and private label cards. Balances are reported monthly in Equifax's Monthly National Consumer Credit Reports and averaged across 12 months for each year.

* Statistically significant relative to 2024 ($p < 0.05$).

Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL)

As buy now, pay later (BNPL) usage intensified, reports of challenges ticked up

- Sixteen percent of households reported using BNPL products in 2024, not statistically different from 2023. However, we find that households reported taking out more loans than in the past.
  - 60% of BNPL users said their household had taken three or more loans, up from 53% in 2023 and 51% in 2022.
- Alongside this increase, reported spending challenges grew. In particular, the share of users who reported difficulty affording payments rose from 5% in 2023 to 8% in 2024.

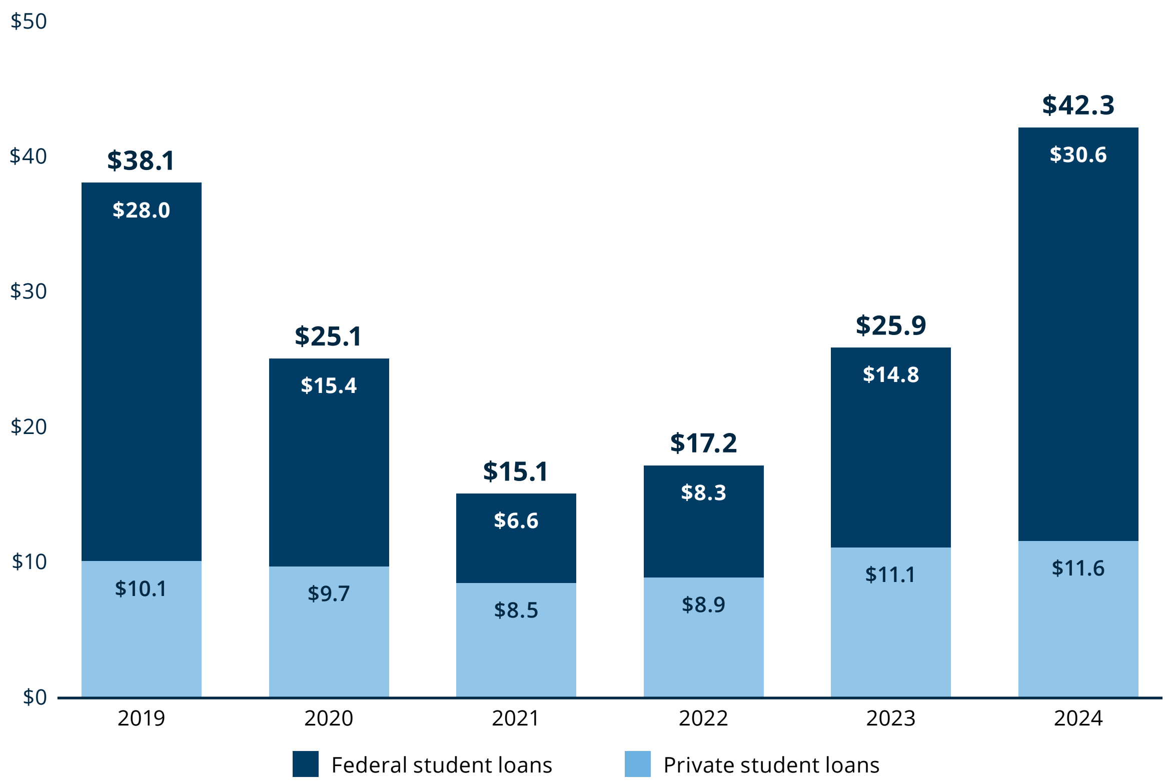
Student Loans

Total student loan payments topped pre-pandemic levels

- Estimated spending on fees and interest for federal student loans more than doubled in 2024, rising from $14.8 billion in 2023 to $30.6 billion (see Figure ES4).
    - This exceeds pre-pandemic levels and marks a nearly five-fold increase from its low point in 2021 of $6.6 billion.
- About one-third (37%) of student loan borrowers currently making payments reported challenges, ranging from late or missed payments to going without food or medicine in order to afford payments.

Figure ES4. Fees and interest for federal and private student loans surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

Estimated fees and interest on federal and private student loans, by year, in billions.



Notes: Fee and interest estimates reflect the calendar year, not the federal government's fiscal year.

LOOKING AHEAD

Rising Spending and Persistent Inequities in a Time of Unease

While macroeconomic indicators suggested some economic moderation in 2024, research shows consumer sentiment around cost of living and the economy remained low. Meanwhile, our analysis finds that aggregate household spending on fees and interest for financial services continued to rise in 2024, with vulnerable populations – including households who are not Financially Healthy, Black and Latine households, and households without prime credit scores – continuing to bear the brunt of these burdens.

In particular, we find evidence of debt strain among certain populations, and a five-year analysis suggests an erosion of self-reported debt manageability among households carrying credit card debt. Furthermore, more than one-third of households currently making student loan payments reported challenges related to those payment obligations.

The change in presidential administrations at the end of 2024 marked a significant turning point. Since these data were collected, financial policy and oversight have shifted significantly, and even more changes lie on the horizon. As these shifts unfold, it will be critical to monitor the market and assess the impact on those who struggle most – work that depends on consistent, trusted, and transparent data. Sustained commitment to gathering and publishing comprehensive data is essential to understanding how consumers manage their finances and where inequities persist. We encourage financial services leaders, employers, policymakers, researchers, and advocates to use these data as a roadmap for creating solutions that help Americans navigate today's economic uncertainty and build lasting financial resilience.

U.S. Spending on Financial Services

Overall Consumer Spending

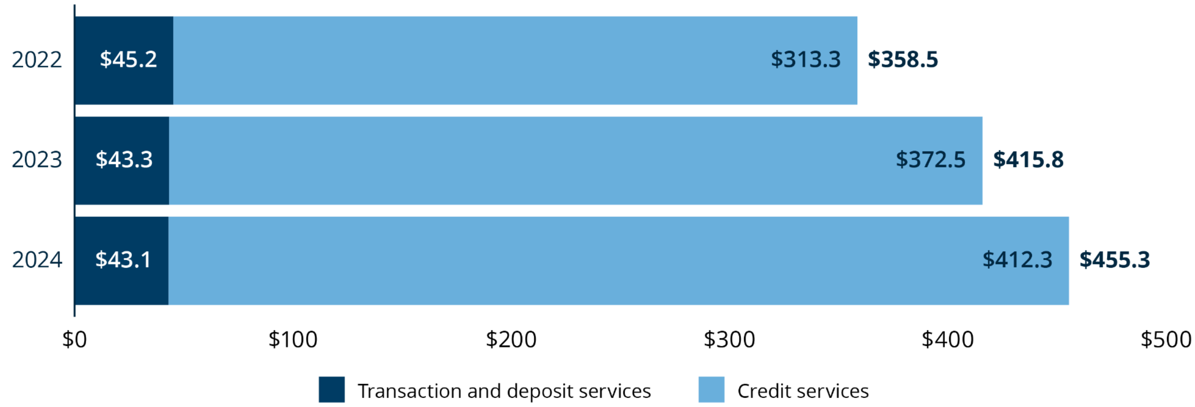
Overall spending on financial products and services jumped nearly $100 billion in 2 years, reaching an estimated $455 billion in 2024.

Fees and interest on all financial services analyzed are estimated at $455 billion in 2024, an increase of close to $40 billion from 2023 ($416 billion) and nearly $100 billion more than 2022 ($358 billion) (see Figure 1).[16]

We analyze spending across two primary categories: transaction and deposit services (including fees paid to maintain bank accounts and transfer funds) and credit services (including most non-mortgage credit lending categories). Spending on transaction and deposit services stayed flat from 2023 at an estimated $43 billion, with few sizable swings in fees. Meanwhile, the credit services category rose 11% year over year to $412 billion, after a jump of nearly 20% the year prior.

A large portion of this growth in credit spending is attributable to finance charges from credit card balances carried month to month.[17] We estimate that households spent approximately $181 billion on interest and fees for revolving credit card balances in 2024, up about $15 billion from the year prior and nearly $50 billion compared to 2022. Federal student loan payments also grew from an estimated $15 billion in 2023 to an estimated $31 billion in 2024, following the resumption of payments.

Figure 1. Overall interest and fees topped $455 billion in 2024.
Total estimated spending on interest and fees, in billions, 2022-2024.



[16] The 2024 FinHealth Spend Report reported total interest and fees of $415 billion in 2023 and $354 billion in 2022. After adjusting several estimates based on new data availability and updated methodologies, our estimate for 2023 is now $416 billion, while 2022 is estimated at $358 billion.
[17] We estimate interest and fees (such as annual fees or late fees) only for cardholders who carry a balance for at least one month of the year by multiplying the total dollar amount of revolving balances by an estimated cost (expressed as a percentage of those balances). For more details, see Appendix II.

Spending on fees and interest continued to fall disproportionately on households who are not Financially Healthy, households of color, and those without prime credit scores.

Financial Health Tier

As with prior years, we continue to find that households who are not Financially Healthy spend far greater amounts on interest and fees – both as a proportion of their income and in absolute terms – than those who are Financially Healthy.

We estimate that Financially Healthy households spent just 1% of their incomes in 2024 on interest and fees for the products covered in this report, compared to 6% for Financially Coping households and 17% – fully one-sixth of household income – for Financially Vulnerable households.

In previous FinHealth Spend Reports, we estimated that, on average, Financially Vulnerable households spent 16% of their incomes on interest and fees in 2023, and 14% in 2022. Although this year's estimates suggest a gradual increase in the cost burden for these households, our national product spending estimates rely on secondary research, and significance testing is not possible.

Financially Healthy households, whose incomes on average are greater than $110,000 a year, spent an estimated $1,400 on interest and fees for the products in this report in 2024.[18] Financially Coping households, with an average household income of $71,000, spent about $4,100. Financially Vulnerable households had average household incomes of $40,000, yet spent an estimated $6,600 on financial services.

Financially Vulnerable households

spent 17x more

of their income on interest and fees than Financially Healthy households in 2024.

Race and Ethnicity

Consistent with prior years, we find that Black and Latine households – who are less frequently Financially Healthy than white households – spent greater percentages of their household incomes on the interest and fees charged by the products and services covered in this report.

On average, Black households spent 8% and Latine households spent 6% of their household incomes on interest and fees in 2024, versus just 4% for white households. These figures are consistent with those found in 2023. Black and Latine households also paid more for interest and

[18] Household income in our survey is reported in ranges. We use the midpoint of these ranges to calculate an average household income figure for each group, which introduces an unknown amount of measurement error in our calculations.

fees in absolute terms, despite lower reported average household incomes. Black and Latine households paid approximately $3,600 and $4,400 in interest and fees, respectively, compared with an estimated $3,400 for white households.[19]

Black households

spent 2x more

of their income on interest and fees than white households in 2024.

Latine households

spent 1.5x more

of their income on interest and fees than white households in 2024.

Credit Tier

Spending on credit products and services comprised the vast majority (91%) of the $455 billion Americans spent on financial services in 2024. Disaggregating this spending by credit tier provides insight into how different households experience credit and the costs they incur.

In the FinHealth Spend survey, we asked respondents the following question: "How would you rate your credit score? Your credit score is a number that tells lenders how risky or safe you are as a borrower." Respondents who answered "Excellent" or "Very good" were coded as prime, "Good" was coded as nonprime, and "Fair," "Poor," and "Don't know" were coded as subprime.[20,21]

We estimate that households with prime credit scores spent, on average, 2% of their incomes on interest and fees in 2024. This compares with 9% for those with nonprime credit and 14% for those with subprime or unknown credit. Respondents with prime credit reported far greater household incomes on average than those without: more than $100,000 per year, versus less than $40,000 for subprime households.[22]

Overall, households without prime credit made up 43% of households but accounted for 64% of interest and fees incurred.

[19] We use the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (Table S1101) for the number of households in the U.S. to extrapolate the racial/ethnic distribution of our survey sample to population totals. We then divide estimated total fees and interest paid for each race/ethnicity group by these population totals to reach an average spending figure for each race/ethnicity.
[20] Fifty-seven percent of our sample is categorized as prime, 17% is nonprime, and 26% is subprime. Our tier cutoffs and sample proportions are generally in line with Experian's VantageScore data, which shows that 64% of Americans qualify as prime or above, 18% as near prime, and 19% as subprime. See Louis DeNicola, "What Is a VantageScore Credit Score?", Experian, June 2024.
[21] We group "Don't know" responses into the subprime category because uncertainty about one's credit score likely signals limited credit engagement or history. In this year's survey, 4% of respondents answered "Don't know." As a follow-up, we asked this group (N = 132), "Do you have a credit score?" to which, 21% responded "No" and 62% responded "Don't know."
[22] We estimate that, on average, households with prime credit have annual household incomes of $102,713, those with nonprime credit have incomes of $63,051, and those with subprime credit have incomes of $37,882.

Households with subprime credit

spent 7x more

of their income on interest and fees than households with prime credit in 2024.

Products and Trends

Transaction and Deposit Services

This section analyzes the fees that households paid to transact funds or maintain bank accounts. Total estimated spending on transaction and deposit fees stayed roughly flat between 2023 and 2024, despite statistically significant contractions in the proportion of households reporting incurring several fees (Table 1).

Table 1. Transaction and deposit services, estimated fees, and reported incidence of product use.

Product	Total estimated fees, in billions				Household incidence	
	2022	2023	2024	Percent change (2024 vs. 2023)^	2023	2024
Deposit account fees†						
Overdraft/NSF fees	$13.6	$11.8	$12.1	2%	17%	15%*
Account maintenance fees	$5.7	$6.0	$6.0	0%	21%	18%*
ATM fees	$2.4	$2.5	$2.3	-7%	38%	34%*
Transaction service fees						
Check cashing, nonbank	$0.7	$0.7	$0.7	3%	4%	5%
International remittances[23]	$13.0	$14.5	$14.9	3%	10%	9%
Money orders[24]	$1.0	$0.8	$0.8	0%	15%	13%*
Prepaid cards[25]	$8.7	$7.0	$6.3	-10%	15%	16%

[23] Estimates reflect remittances facilitated both through banks and nonbanks.
[24] Estimates reflect money orders purchased at bank and nonbank locations.
[25] The estimate for prepaid cards includes fees across three subcategories: general purpose reloadable cards, payroll cards, and government benefits cards.

Total	$45.2	$43.3	$43.1	0%		

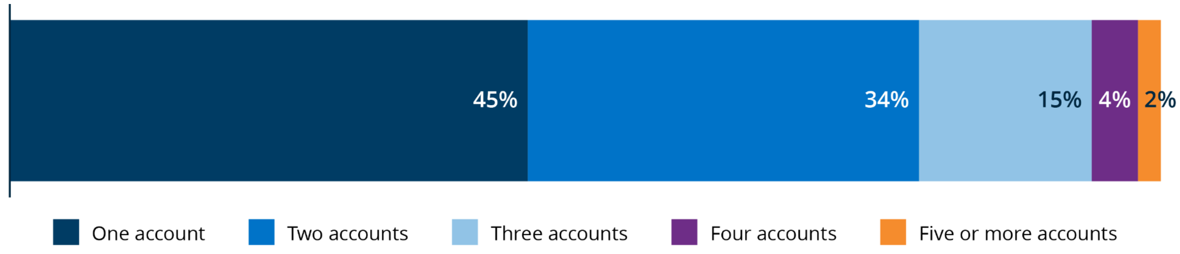
Notes:
^ Year-over-year differences in total estimated fees are derived from secondary research, and statistical significance testing is not possible.
† Incidence rates for overdraft/NSF and ATM fees among households who have a checking account or had closed a checking account in the last 12 months (N = 5,268 in 2023 and N = 4,915 in 2024). Incidence rates for account maintenance fees among households who have a checking or savings account or had closed a checking account in the last 12 months (N = 5,310 in 2023 and N = 4,957 in 2024).
* Statistically significant difference between 2023 and 2024 ($p < 0.05$).
Appendix II lists financial services for which our methodology of calculating total estimated fees has changed since our last published report. All 2022 and 2023 data have been updated to align with the most recent methodology to make year-over-year comparison possible. Any changes in survey questions used to calculate household incidence are detailed in the footnotes and summarized in Appendix II.

Account Ownership

For the first time, we asked respondents to share information on the number of checking accounts held by their household and the types of institutions they bank with. These questions were added to gain better insight into how various segments of the population approach banking and the institutions they choose.

We find that 45% of the banked population reported having only one checking account at the household level (see Figure 2). **The majority (55%) reported holding more than one household checking account,** and more than one in five (21%) households reported three or more accounts. Using multiple accounts, particularly across different institutions, could present complexities for institutions seeking to gain a complete understanding of a household's income and expenses.

Figure 2. The majority of banked households have multiple checking accounts.
Number of checking accounts, among households with at least one checking account.



Notes: Among households who indicated they have at least one checking account (N = 4,891).

Financially Healthy households, households with prime credit, and higher-income households were more likely to report holding multiple checking accounts. For example, 72% of households earning

$100,000 or more reported having more than one account, compared with 34% of those earning less than $30,000.[26]

Of the households holding multiple accounts, 69% reported having accounts at numerous institutions. Of that group, more than half (55%) reported holding accounts at different *types* of institutions – for example, a traditional bank and a credit union, or a traditional bank and an online bank.[27] **This translates to roughly one in five banked households holding accounts at more than one type of institution.**

These findings suggest that many households turn to an array of financial service providers to meet their financial needs – an approach that could present challenges to entities seeking to establish themselves as a household's primary financial institution.[28]

New Thinking About Unbanked Households

Like other surveys, we find that a very small percentage of U.S. households are "unbanked" – meaning no one in their house had a checking or savings account over the prior 12 months (5% in 2024).[29,30] The proportion of the population that is unbanked has fallen considerably over the last decade.

Yet even within this relatively small group, some households appeared to be using alternatives that replicate core banking services. For example, nearly a quarter (23%) of unbanked respondents said they had an account with an online-only bank, like Chime, Ally, SoFi, or Varo.[31]

This suggests that some households currently categorized as unbanked may actually access many financial services through fintech companies (some of which hold bank charters, while others partner with banks). The FinHealth Spend team plans to explore this further in an upcoming brief.

[26] Fifty-nine percent of banked Financially Healthy households reported holding more than one account, compared to 54% of Financially Coping and 52% of Financially Vulnerable households. Fifty-nine percent of banked households with prime credit scores reported more than one account, compared to 52% of nonprime and 49% of subprime households. These findings are statistically significant. We also find that 50% of banked Black households held more than one account, compared to 54% of white households and 58% of Latine households. However, we do not control for household size in this analysis, which may influence some of these findings.

[27] Response options were: "1) A bank with physical branch locations (e.g., Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Chase, etc.), 2) An online bank with no physical branch locations (e.g., Chime, Ally, SoFi, Varo, etc.), 3) A credit union, 4) A savings and loan association (also known as thrift institutions), 5) I don't know."

[28] Alex Johnson, "The Primacy Directive," Fintech Takes, June 2025.

[29] We asked about checking and savings account ownership in two separate questions; our figure for the unbanked represents respondents who indicated that no one in their household had either.

[30] "2023 FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households," Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), November 2024.

[31] We asked respondents who reported that no one in their household had a checking or savings account the following question: "In the past 12 months, have you or anyone else in your household had an account with an online bank with no physical branch locations (e.g., Chime, Ally, SoFi, Varo, etc.)?"

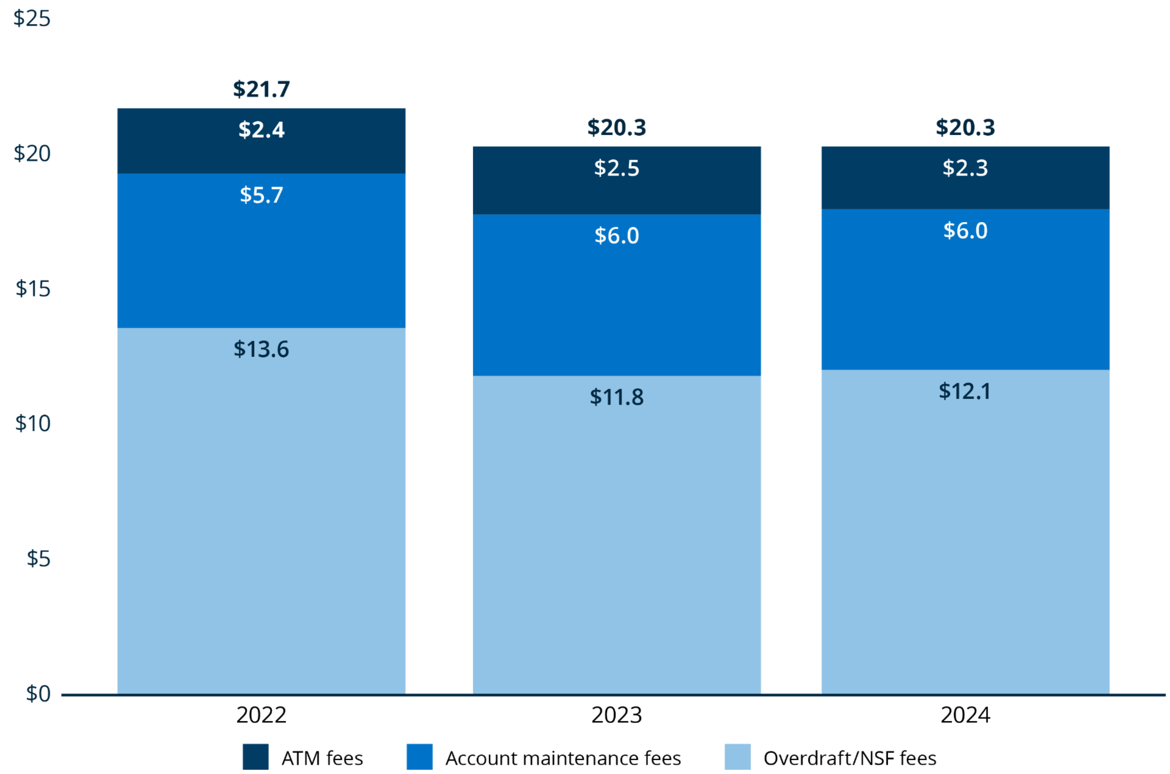
Deposit Account Fees

Following several years of contraction, we estimate that overdraft/NSF fees grew slightly in 2024.[32] Consumers paid an estimated $12.1 billion in overdraft/NSF fees in 2024, up from $11.8 billion in 2023.

With a small decline in ATM fees and no change in account maintenance fees, we estimate that overall fees collected by financial institutions across these three categories stayed flat compared with 2023 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Estimated deposit account fees (from account maintenance fees, ATM fees, and overdraft/NSF fees) were flat in 2024.

Estimated fees in billions, by type and year.



Notes: Estimates include fee revenue for banks and credit unions. The above categories do not represent a comprehensive list of all possible fees associated with deposit accounts, but reflect those detailed in the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) Call Reports.

[32] We define overdraft/NSF fees as fees charged for having insufficient funds in one's checking account to pay for a purchase or charge. This includes an overdraft fee charged if the bank covered the item, or an NSF fee or bounced check fee if the bank returned the item as unpaid. However, policy reforms for NSF and overdraft have differed, with many banks having eliminated NSF fees outright over the past few years. The CFPB has also found that most NSF fee payers incur overdraft fees. See "Overdraft/NSF metrics for Top 20 banks based on overdraft/NSF revenue reported during 2021," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, April 2024; and "Non-sufficient fund (NSF) fee practices of the 25 banks reporting the most overdraft/NSF revenue in 2021," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, May 2023.

Overdraft/NSF Fees

In early 2025, our overdraft brief released new estimates of the overdraft/NSF fees collected by financial institutions, finding that **credit unions accounted for a much greater share of total overdraft/NSF revenue than previously estimated – 45%, compared to our previous assumption of 18%.**[33]

The brief leveraged newly available data from the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) on credit unions with more than $1 billion in assets, complementing existing reporting on banks of similar size.[34,35] After the 2024 data release, however, the NCUA announced it would no longer make this data public.[36]

To explore how financial institution type relates to overdraft/NSF experiences, our 2024 survey first looked at the share of households reporting at least one overdraft fee, based on where they bank (or bank most frequently, if they hold accounts at multiple institutions).[37] Across all banked households, 15% reported being charged an overdraft/NSF fee. **Incidence was similar across institutions**: 14% of those whose primary account is with a bank and 15% of primary credit union account holders reported being charged an overdraft/NSF fee, a difference that is not statistically significant.

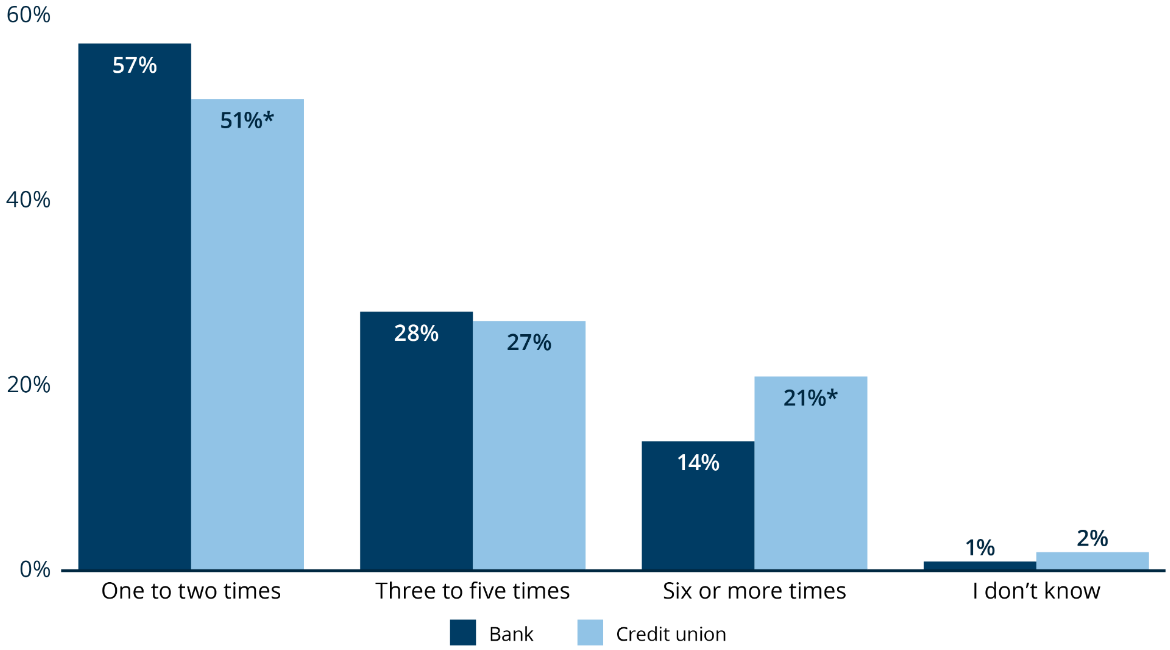
To more clearly pinpoint how overdraft/NSF experience varies by type of institution, our FinHealth Spend survey asked respondents where they overdrafted and how many fees they incurred.[38] Here, we found a notable difference: **Households who incurred overdraft fees at credit unions were more likely to report higher numbers of fees** than those overdrafting with a bank. Twenty-one

[33] Hannah Gdalman, MK Falgout, & David Silberman, "Overdraft, NSF Fees Bigger Burden Than Previously Estimated," Financial Health Network, March 2025.
[34] In order to account for small banks with assets of less than $1 billion, our estimates apply the proportion of overdraft fees to noninterest income from banks with assets between $1 and $2 billion to the total noninterest income of small banks. For small credit unions, we similarly estimate overdraft fees by applying the proportion of overdraft fees to total fee income for credit unions with assets between $1 and $2 billion to the total fee income of small credit unions.
[35] Because we do not have more detailed data on credit union fees in 2022 and 2023, we apply the 2024 proportion of credit union overdraft/NSF fees to total credit union fee income to earlier years.
[36] "Hauptman Announces Changes to NCUA's Overdraft/NSF Fee Collection," National Credit Union Administration, March 2025.
[37] Our survey question asked: "In the last 12 months, have you or anyone else in your household been charged any fee for not having enough money in your checking account to pay for a purchase or charge that came in? This could be called an overdraft fee, a non-sufficient funds fee, or a bounced check fee." Through this wording we sought to exclude customers whose accounts went into the negative but who were not charged a fee, for example due to grace periods, cushions, or other mechanisms. This question was asked of all respondents with checking accounts in the last 12 months. Respondents who reported that they only had a checking account at a bank, or whose most frequently used checking account was at a bank, were coded as "bank account holders." Respondents who reported that they only had an account at a credit union, or whose most frequently used checking account was at a credit union, were coded as "credit union account holders." For simplicity, we use the term "overdraft fee" to refer to either overdraft or NSF fees.
[38] Respondents who indicated that their household had been charged an overdraft fee, a NSF fee, or a bounced check fee in the last 12 months were asked the following: "Thinking about your overdraft experiences over the past 12 months, what type of financial institution(s) did you overdraft with? Please select all that apply." Response options were: "1) A bank, 2) A credit union, 3) A savings and loan association (also known as thrift institutions), 4) Other, please specify, or 5) I don't know." This allowed us to better pinpoint the location at which overdrafts were occurring. Respondents could select multiple options.

percent of respondents who incurred overdraft fees with a credit union reported six or more overdrafts, compared with 14% among those who incurred bank overdraft fees (see Figure 4).[39]

Figure 4. Respondents who incurred overdraft fees at a credit union reported a greater average number of overdrafts.

Number of times an overdraft/NSF fee was paid, among households with at least one overdraft fee, by institution type.



Notes: Among respondents who indicated that they only overdrafted with a credit union (N = 152), vs. only overdrafted with a bank (N = 430). Excludes responses from households who said they had overdrafts at multiple different types of institutions, at other types of institutions, or those who did not know the institution type.
* Statistically significant relative to households that reported being charged an overdraft fee by a bank ($p < 0.05$).

Previous research has shown that the majority of overdraft fees are incurred by a small share of households.[40] Financial Health Network research has also found that this group faces deep financial strain, with the vast majority characterized as Financially Vulnerable.[41,42]

[39] See footnote 38. Among respondents who indicated that they only overdrafted with a credit union (N = 152), vs. only overdrafted with a bank (N = 430). Excludes responses from households who said they had overdrafts at multiple different types of institutions, at other types of institutions, or those who did not know the institution type.
[40] "CFPB data point: Frequent overdrafters," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, August 2017.
[41] Meghan Greene, MK Falgout, & Necati Celik, Ph.D., "Overdraft Trends Amid Historic Policy Shifts," Financial Health Network, June 2023.
[42] Note that although frequent overdraft fees are often associated with Financially Vulnerable households, our data show that among credit union overdrafters, 30% are classified as Financially Vulnerable, compared with 41% among bank overdrafters. This suggests that the higher frequency of overdrafts at credit unions cannot be attributed solely to financial vulnerability.

Our new survey data on overdrafts by institution type – though limited by sample size – indicate that households incurring frequent overdraft fees may be more prevalent at credit unions. Additionally, studies indicate that credit unions have made fewer overdraft/NSF fee policy reforms, like adding fee cushions or grace periods, compared with large banks.[43,44] These factors could help explain the relatively high estimated overdraft/NSF revenues at these institutions, raising important questions about how institutional practices respond to customer circumstances and shape financial outcomes.

Who Owns Crypto? A Data Update

Nine percent of households reported holding cryptocurrency in 2024. This figure is similar to the share of crypto owners in 2023 (8%), but represents a drop from the 11% who owned in 2022, suggesting lingering aftereffects from the collapse of FTX in late 2022.[45]

Consistent with prior years, we find stark differences in crypto ownership by household income. Sixteen percent of households earning more than $100,000 held cryptocurrency in 2024, compared with just 3% of those earning less than $30,000.

Crypto ownership aligns with other measures of financial security. One in 10 (10%) Financially Healthy households reported holding cryptocurrency in 2024, compared with just 4% among Financially Vulnerable households. Households with prime credit scores were also more likely to report holding crypto than those with subprime credit: 11% of households with prime credit reported holding cryptocurrency in 2024, compared with 5% of subprime households. Our 2024 brief on cryptocurrency found that many crypto owners held the currency as part of a broader investment strategy.[46]

Credit Services

This section estimates the amount households paid to access a wide range of non-mortgage credit.

In 2024, total estimated spending on the credit products analyzed rose almost $40 billion to $412.3 billion (see Figure 5). This increase was driven primarily by rising revenues from revolving general purpose credit card debt (up more than $15 billion compared with 2023) and the resumption of federal student loan payments (up about $16 billion compared with 2023).

[43] "Vast majority of NSF fees have been eliminated, saving consumers nearly $2 billion annually," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, October 2023.
[44] Aaron Klein, "Credit Unions Are Making Money Off People Living Paycheck to Paycheck," Politico, October 2023.
[45] The FDIC estimates that 5% of American households held cryptocurrency in 2023: 2023 FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households," FDIC, November 2024.
[46] "Cryptocurrency Kicks Off 2023 With Decline in Ownership," Financial Health Network, March 2023.

Figure 5. Interest and fees in the credit services category rose nearly $40 billion. Total estimated spending on interest and fees for credit services, by type, in billions, 2022-2024.

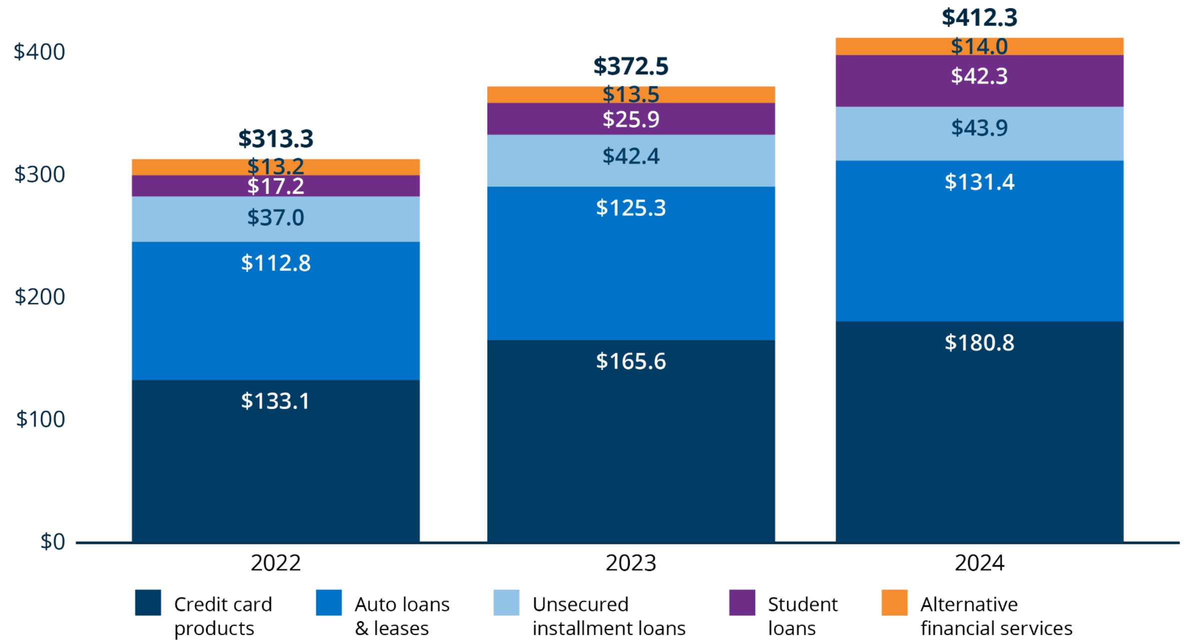


Table 2. Credit services, estimated fees and interest, and reported incidence of product use.

Product	Total estimated fees and interest, in billions				Household incidence	
	2022	2023	2024	Percent change (2024 vs. 2023)^	2023	2024
Auto leases	$7.1	$8.0	$8.4	5%	10%	9%
Auto loans - buy here, pay here (BHPH)	$9.8	$9.4	$9.2	-2%	3%†	3%†
Auto loans - new	$29.4	$34.6	$39.1	13%	16%	16%
Auto loans - used	$66.5	$73.3	$74.6	2%	21%	19%*

Credit cards - general purpose (revolving balance)[47]	$120.2	$149.7	$165.1	10%	51%[Y]	49%[Y]
Credit cards - private label (revolving balance)	$12.7	$15.6	$15.4	-1%	41%[Y]	38%[Y]
Credit cards - secured	$0.2	$0.2	$0.2	1%	6%	7%
Unsecured installment loans[48,49]	$37.0	$42.4	$43.9	4%	10%	9%*
Pawn loans[50]	$3.1	$3.4	$3.8	12%	5%	3%*
Payday loans[51]	$2.9	$2.9	$3.0	0%	4%	2%*
Refund anticipation check Refund anticipation loan	$1.6	$1.5	$1.5	-2%	4%	3%
Rent-to-own	$4.8	$4.7	$4.6	-2%	4%	3%
Student loans - federal	$8.3	$14.8	$30.6	108%	16%	16%
Student loans - private	$8.9	$11.1	$11.6	5%	5%	4%
Title loans	$0.9	$0.9	$1.2	29%	2%	2%
Total	$313.3	$372.5	$412.3	11%		

† Figure indicates rate of BHPH loans among those with used car loans (N = 1,057 in 2023 and N = 911 in 2024).
Y Figure indicates rate of revolvership among households holding general purpose or private label credit cards (N = 4,573 in 2023 and N = 4,250 in 2024).
^ Year-over-year differences in total estimated fees are derived from secondary research, and statistical significance testing is not possible.
* Statistically significant difference between 2023 and 2024 ($p < 0.05$).
Notes: Appendix II lists financial services for which our methodology of calculating total estimated fees has changed since our last published report. All 2022-2023 data have been updated to align with the most recent methodology to make year-over-year comparison possible. Appendix II also lists the changes in survey questions used in calculating household incidence.

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[47] Credit card totals include interest on revolving balances as well as annual fees, transactional fees, and penalty fees for account holders with revolving balances. We do not include fees incurred by consumers who do not carry a balance at least once.
[48] Both bank and nonbank.
[49] The 2025 FinHealth Spend survey asked respondents 1) if their households held any unsecured installment loans, 2) how many, and 3) what type of lender(s) they used. This shifts the order from the 2024 survey, which asked 1) if households held any unsecured installment loans, 2) what type of lender(s) they used, and 3) how many loans they had.
[50] Prior to 2025, FinHealth Spend surveys asked about incidence and frequency of pawn loans in a single question. The 2025 FinHealth Spend survey only asked about incidence – whether, in the past 12 months, households had pawned an item at a pawn shop.
[51] Prior to 2025, Finhealth Spend surveys asked about incidence and frequency of payday loans in a single question. The 2025 FinHealth Spend question first asked households about incidence – whether, in the past 12 months, households had taken out a payday loan. Those who had used payday then received a question about the number of payday loans they had taken.

Given the magnitude of revolving credit card debt, we first discuss credit card estimates. Subsequently, we analyze other credit services revenues.

Credit Cards

We analyze total spending by households who revolve credit card balances (including interest incurred and fees paid) on two types of cards: general purpose cards (which can be used at a wide variety of merchants) and private label cards (otherwise known as store credit cards, usable only with the issuing merchant or affiliated merchants and websites).

Fees and interest assessed on general purpose cards comprised the vast majority of total revenues, reaching $165.1 billion in 2024. This figure grew 10% from 2023 ($149.7 billion), a notably slower pace than the 25% growth seen the year prior. With the growth in the annual average credit card interest rate moderating in 2024 compared to 2023, the expansion was largely due to growth in total outstanding balances carried month to month.[52] Elevated balances combined with persistent revolving behavior continued to drive up total interest charges.[53,54] In fact, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia found that the share of accounts making only minimum payments hit a 12-year high in late 2024.[55] The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis also noted that the share of U.S. consumers experiencing delinquencies continued to rise, though the pace of increase slowed.[56]

Meanwhile, spending on fees and interest for private label cards stayed roughly steady, with an estimated $15.4 billion in interest and fees from revolving balances in 2024, compared with $15.6 billion in 2023.

Since 2020, we have observed a long-term weakening of overall debt manageability among households with credit card debt. In 2020, 67% of households with revolving credit card debt reported that their total debt loads were manageable (see Figure 6). This figure declined relatively steadily in the following years, reaching 57% in 2024. In contrast, households without credit card debt did not report a similar decline. Further research is warranted to understand the degree to which credit card debt specifically contributed to this strain, as opposed to other types of debt or other external factors.

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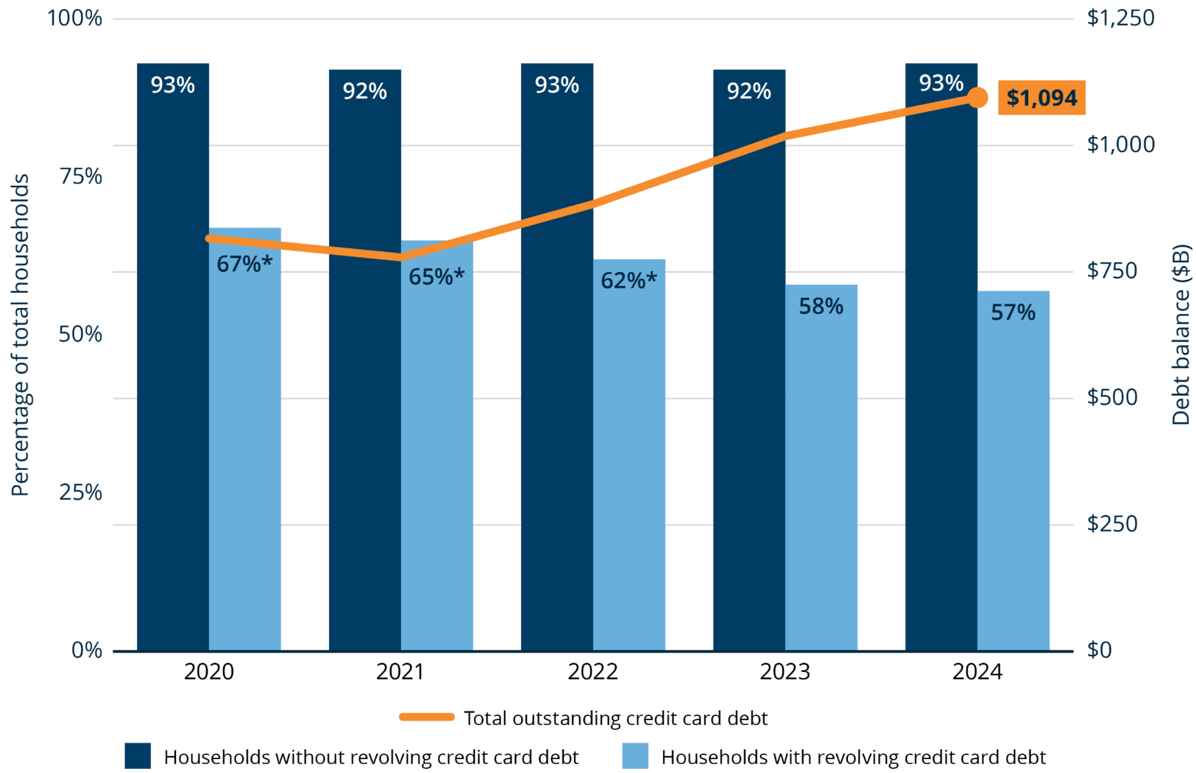
[52] "Commercial Bank Interest Rate on Credit Card Plans, Accounts Assessed Interest," Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.
[53] Forty-nine percent of cardholders in our survey reported carrying a balance month to month in 2024; this represents a non-statistically significant change from 51% in 2023. The Financial Health Pulse® 2025 U.S. Trends Report found that the share who reported carrying a revolving balance on a credit card dropped from 36% in 2023 to 34% in 2024, however, this is measured based on total households, not only cardholder households. See Andrew Warren, Shira Hammerslough, Wanjira Chege, & Taylor C. Nelms, "Financial Health Pulse® 2025 U.S. Trends Report," Financial Health Network, September 2025.
[54] "Growth in Originations Expected Across Multiple Credit Products in 2025," TransUnion, February 2025.
[55] Jeremy Cohn & Brandon Goldstein, "Large Bank Credit Card and Mortgage Data 2024 Q4 Narrative: Q4 2024 Insights Report," Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, April 2025.
[56] Juan M. Sánchez & Masataka Mori, "The Broad, Continuing Rise in Delinquent U.S. Credit Card Debt Revisited," Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, May 2025.

Figure 6. Manageability of debt has declined among households with revolving credit card debt.

Self-reported manageability of debt, by credit card revolvership, 2020-2024.



Notes: Bar chart (left axis) shows the percentage of cardholder households who reported they "have a manageable amount of debt" or "do not have any debt" over time. Households with revolving debt are those who carried a balance for at least one month of the year on general purpose or private label credit cards (N = 1,673 in 2020, N = 2,024 in 2021, N = 2,006 in 2022, N = 2,150 in 2023, and N = 1,933 in 2024), and those without are households who did not carry a balance (N = 1,523 in 2020, N = 2,057 in 2021, N = 2,149 in 2022, N = 2,413 in 2023, and N = 2,308 in 2024.) Line graph (right axis) represents total outstanding credit card debt: the sum of average annual balances for general purpose bankcards and private label cards. Balances are reported monthly in Equifax's Monthly National Consumer Credit Reports and averaged across 12 months for each year.
* Statistically significant relative to 2024 ($p < 0.05$).

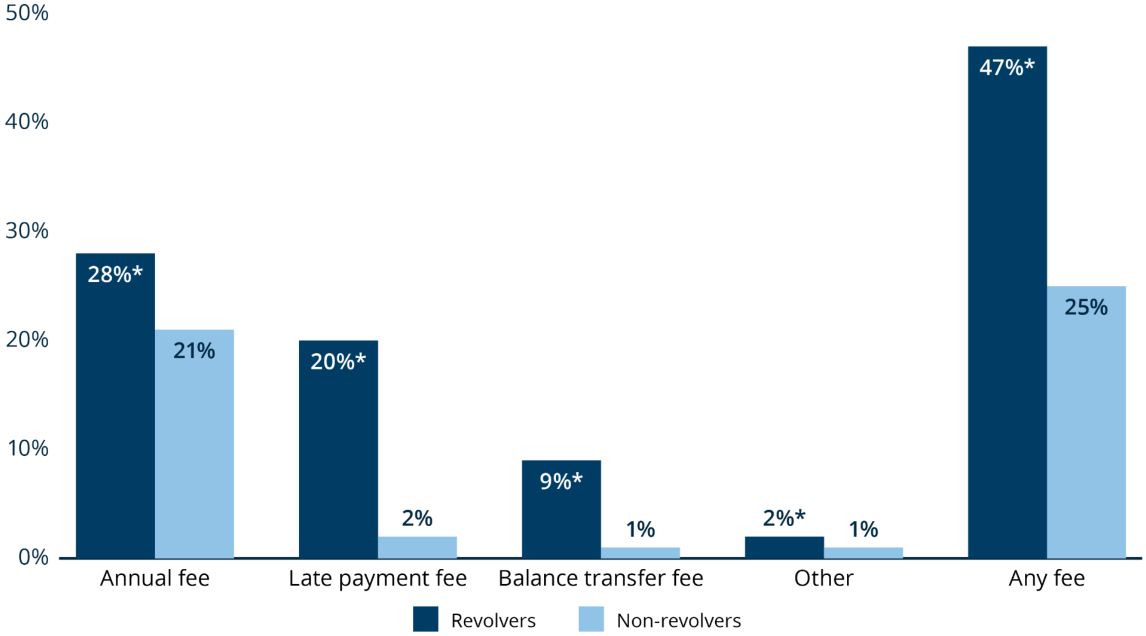
How Much Are People Spending on Credit Card Fees?

We estimate that of the $165.1 billion total spending on revolving general purpose credit card balances, fees comprised $25.8 billion, or 16% of the total. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has estimated that cardholders who revolve balances pay almost all of the interest and nearly three-quarters of the fees charged, while earning less than 30% of the value of rewards.[57]

[57] "The Consumer Credit Card Market," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, October 2023.

Similarly, we find that credit card revolvers report incurring all fees – including annual fees – at higher rates than transactors. Overall, about 36% of general purpose credit card holders (regardless of revolver status) reported incurring some type of fee (Figure 7). Nearly half of those who revolved balances (47%) reported incurring a fee, compared with 25% of those who did not revolve.

Figure 7. Almost half of revolvers reported paying a credit card fee in 2024.
Percentage of respondents with general purpose credit cards reporting experiencing a fee in 2024, by revolvership.



Notes: Among cardholder households who carried a balance for at least one month of the year on a general purpose credit card (N = 1,936) and those who did not (N = 2,313). Multiple response options were possible.
* Statistically significant relative to non-revolvers ($p < 0.05$).

Incidence of credit card fees also varies significantly by financial health tier. Financially Vulnerable households reported experiencing each of these fees – including annual fees – more frequently than Financially Healthy households. The differences are especially stark when looking at late fees. About half (49%) of Financially Vulnerable credit card holders paid a late fee in 2024, compared with just 3% of Financially Healthy credit card holders. Black and Latine credit card holders also reported experiencing a late fee at higher rates than white households (20% and 16%, respectively, compared with 9% among white households).

Other Credit Services

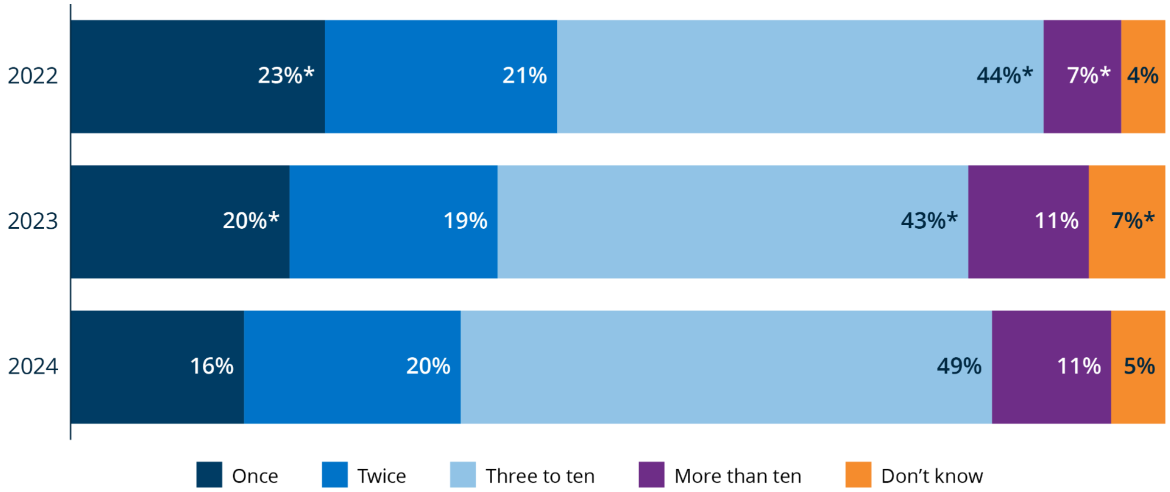
Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL)

Our survey finds that 16% of households reported using BNPL loans in 2024, similar to the 17% who reported using this service in 2023.[58]

However, among users, we find a growing trend in the reported number of BNPL loans. In 2024, 60% of users said they took out three or more loans, compared with 53% in 2023 and 51% in 2022 (Figure 8).

Figure 8. The reported number of annual BNPL uses is growing.[59]

Number of BNPL purchases in the last 12 months, among those with at least 1 BNPL purchase.



Notes: Among households with at least one BNPL purchase in the past year (N = 642 in 2022, N = 862 in 2023, and N = 724 in 2024).
* Statistically significant relative to 2024 ($p < 0.05$).

A persistent question about BNPL has been whether users are "stacking" multiple loans – meaning holding multiple BNPL loans from different institutions at the same time. This practice could potentially expose borrowers to unmanageable levels of debt and lenders to greater risk, particularly since most BNPL loans are not yet reported to credit bureaus.

To better understand stacking behavior, we asked BNPL respondents how many times they had used BNPL in the past month. Because most BNPL loans are repaid in four payments over six weeks, this measure allowed us to see whether loans overlapped. We then asked users with multiple BNPL loans in the prior month to indicate the service they used, allowing us to identify those who used multiple providers. One-third (33%) of BNPL users reported having taken loans multiple times in the

[58] Fourteen percent and 7% of respondents reported that their households had used BNPL in the 2022 and 2021 surveys, respectively.
[59] Survey question language was modified slightly between the questionnaire for 2022 and 2023 to specify household use.

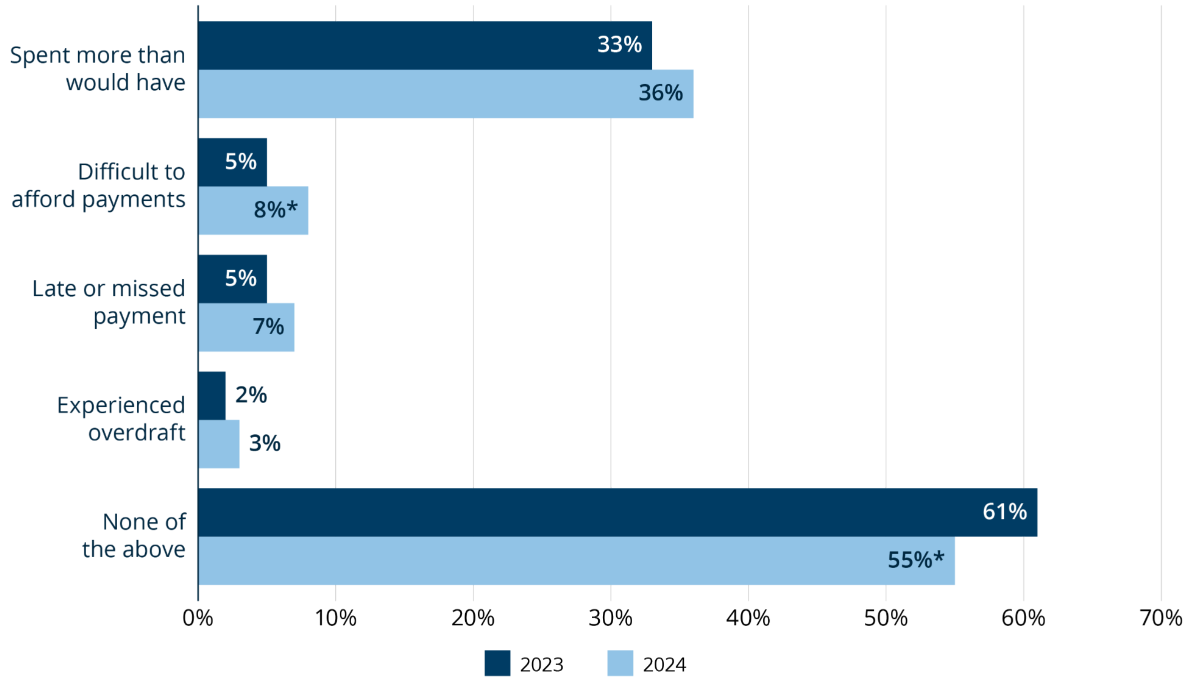
past month, and of that group, 4 in 10 (41%) reported loans from more than one provider.[60] Neither figure is statistically different from 2023.

However, we find some evidence that challenges are growing. We asked BNPL users whether they experienced issues such as spending more money or making a purchase that they would not have if BNPL were not available, difficulty affording payments, missing or making late payments, or experiencing overdraft or other bank fees due to BNPL payments.

The share of BNPL users who reported none of these experiences shrank from 61% in 2023 to 55% in 2024, a statistically significant decline (see Figure 9). We also find an increase in the share of users who reported difficulty affording payments, which rose from 5% in 2023 to 8% in 2024. While the share of users that reported a late or missed payment rose from 5% to 7%, the increase is not statistically significant.[61]

Figure 9. The share of BNPL users reporting spending challenges rose in 2024 compared to 2023.

Percent of BNPL users reporting challenge, 2023 vs. 2024.



Notes: Among those with at least one BNPL purchase in the past year (N = 859 in 2023 and N = 725 in 2024).
* Statistically significant relative to 2023 ($p < 0.05$).

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[60] The CFPB found that, in 2022, 33% of all BNPL users had concurrent loans from different providers. See "Consumer Use of Buy Now, Pay Later and Other Unsecured Debt," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, January 2025.

[61] Estimates of BNPL use and payment distress have differed, with contributing factors likely including differences in survey wording, sampling techniques, and timing. The Survey of Household and Economic Decisionmaking (SHED) estimates that 15% of households held BNPL in 2024, with 24% reporting a late fee (these figures were 14% and 18%, respectively for 2023). The FDIC estimates that in 2023 just 4% of households used BNPL and 13% of users were late or missed a payment.

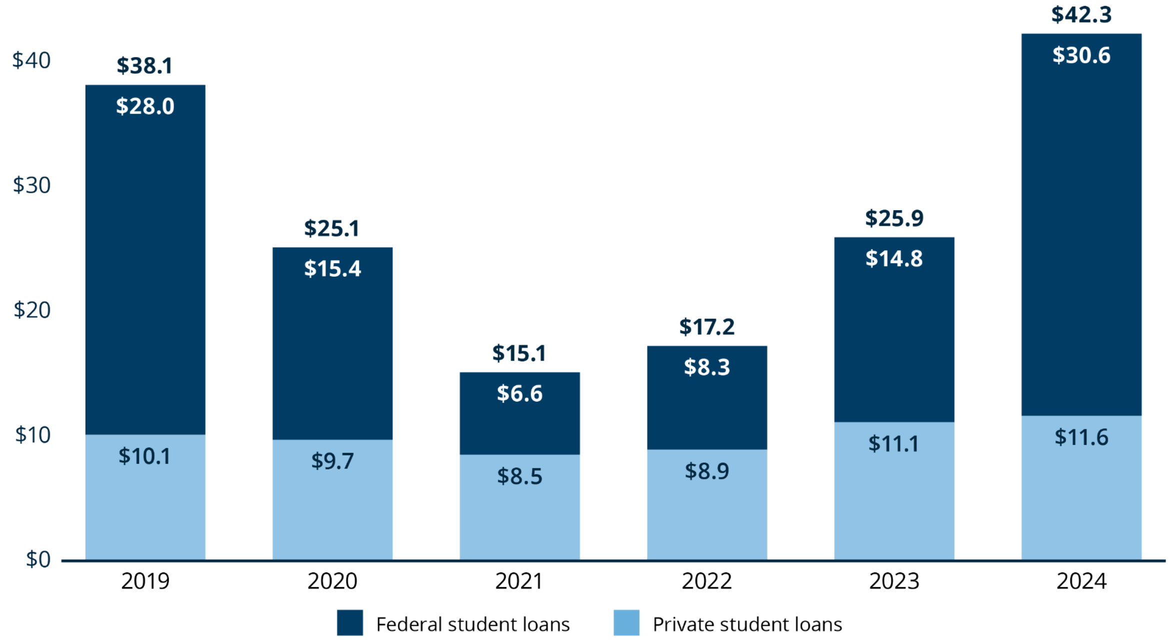
Student Loans

Estimated spending on fees and interest for federal student loans more than doubled in 2024, rising from $14.8 billion in 2023 to $30.6 billion (see Figure 10). This exceeds pre-pandemic levels and marks a nearly fivefold increase from its low point in 2021 ($6.6 billion).

This growth corresponds with the end of the COVID-era relief measures. The moratorium on student loan payments ended in September 2023, making 2024 the first full post-COVID calendar year in which payments resumed (though borrowers enrolled in the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) program were under forbearance for much of the year).[62] Additionally, the one-year grace period that prevented missed payments from being reported to credit bureaus expired in fall 2024.

Figure 10. Fees and interest for federal and private student loans surpassed pre-pandemic levels in 2024.

Estimated fees and interest on federal and private student loans, by year, in billions.



Notes: Fee and interest estimates reflect the calendar year, not the federal government's fiscal year.

To understand the impact of resumed payments and renewed credit reporting, we asked respondents with household federal student loan debt whether they were currently making payments, and whether they had experienced any difficulty in doing so.[63]

[62] The nearly 8 million borrowers enrolled in the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) plan were placed in forbearance in July 2024, with interest accrual resuming August 2025. See "U.S. Department of Education Continues to Improve Federal Student Loan Repayment Options, Addresses Illegal Biden Administration Actions," U.S. Department of Education, July 2025; Kamaron McNair, "Nearly 8 million student loan borrowers will see their balances start growing again this month," CNBC, August 2025.

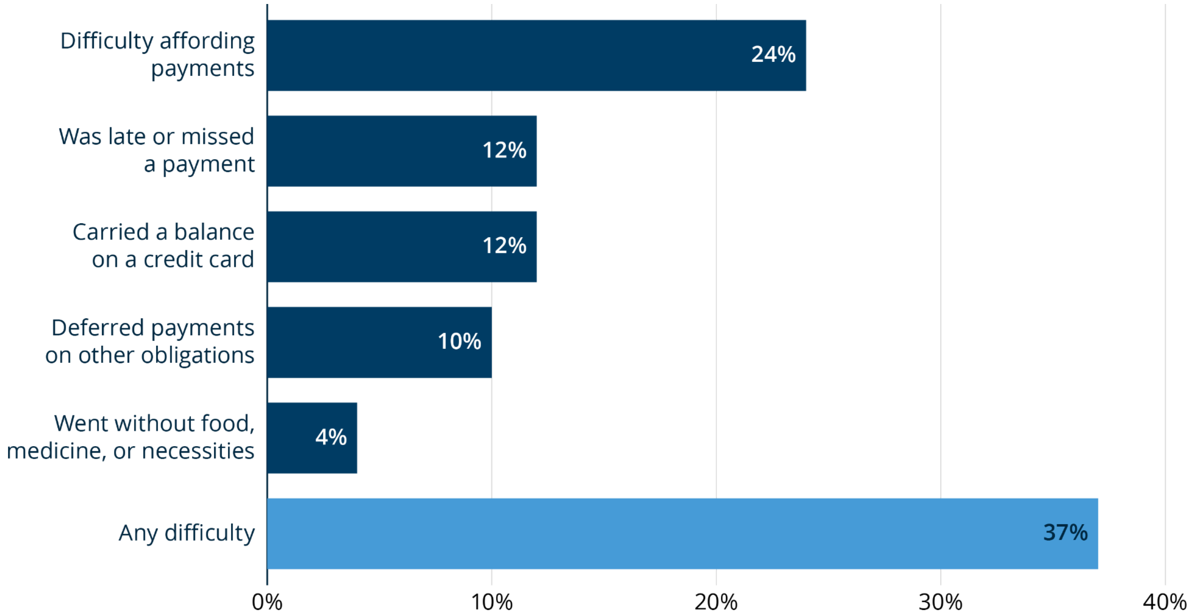
[63] We only asked about difficulties making payments among the 56% of the population who reported currently making payments. This approach was selected to avoid including responses among those who are, for example, in deferment or forbearance.

Among those making payments, nearly two-thirds (63%) reported no issues. However, **about one-third (37%) reported challenges, including difficulty making a payment, late or missed payments, and going without food or medicine in order to afford making a payment** (see Figure 11).[64] Those reporting a challenge are disproportionately not Financially Healthy, more likely to be Black, earn lower incomes, and lack prime credit.

These payment challenges could foreshadow broader credit impacts. The 2025 Pulse Trends report found that credit scores decreased among student loan borrowers between 2024 and 2025, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York estimates that more than 9 million borrowers could see significant drops in their credit scores as delinquencies begin appearing on credit reports in 2025.[65]

Figure 11. About one-third of households making student loan payments reported difficulty.

Reported incidence of difficulty in making student loan payments, among respondents with household federal student loan debt who are currently making payments.



Notes: Respondents who reported that their household currently has student loans and that they were currently making payments towards those loans (N = 507) were asked: "Which of the following have you or anyone in your household experienced in the last 12 months in connection to your student loan payments? Please select all that apply."

[64] Respondents who reported 1) having student loans in their household and 2) currently making payments towards the loans were asked: "Which of the following have you or anyone in your household experienced in the last 12 months in connection to your student loan payments? Please select all that apply." Response options were: "1) It was difficult to afford the payments, 2) I was late or missed one or more payments, 3) I carried a balance on a credit card that I otherwise would not have, 4) I went without food, medicine, or other necessities to afford my payments, 5) I deferred payments on bills, other loans, or other financial obligations; or 6) None of the above."

[65] The share of households with student loans who reported that their credit score was "good," "very good," or "excellent" dropped from 69% in 2023 to 65% in 2024. See: Andrew Warren, Shira Hammerslough, Wanjira Chege, & Taylor C. Nelms, "Financial Health Pulse® 2025 U.S. Trends Report," Financial Health Network, September 2025.

Navigating What's Next

In a moment of change, the need for trusted economic data is more crucial than ever.

2024 was marked by dramatic changes in financial policy and regulation, and our data reflect how American households leveraged financial services during this moment of uncertainty.

Consistent with prior years, we find that people who are struggling financially continued to allocate far more of their incomes to financial services, both as a percentage of household income and in dollar amounts. This underscores the financial burden felt by many families and the deep costs of financial insecurity.

Each year, our reporting and analysis depend on consistent, trusted, and transparent data. We conduct an extensive review of data and reports to help size financial markets, identify trends, and understand the diverse experiences of different populations. Such analysis is critical for responsible policymaking and product development that protects consumers – especially those who are most vulnerable.

As the policy and regulatory environment continues to shift in 2025, this report will serve as a tool for financial services providers, researchers, policymakers, and advocates to better understand trends in consumer spending and spotlight opportunities to advance equitable financial health policies.

We encourage continued collection and publication of rich, disaggregated, and reliable data that helps shed light on how consumers are financing their lives – and the disparities that persist.

We welcome suggestions for additional analysis, partnership, or resources that can strengthen our work. We also welcome inquiries from policymakers, researchers, and others who are interested in exploring our data in greater detail.

Appendices

Appendix I: Supplemental Data Tables

Table A1. Estimated spending by population.
Fees and interest by product per household type, in billions.

		Financial health			Race and ethnicity			Credit tier		
	Overall	Healthy (N= 1,978)	Coping (N = 2,536)	Vulnerable (N = 584)	Black (N = 527)	Latine (N = 638)	White (N = 3,365)	Prime (N = 3,366)	Nonprime (N = 743)	Subprime (N = 999)
Transaction and deposit services										
Account maintenance fees	$6.0	$1.0	$3.5	$1.4	$1.0	$1.6	$2.8	$2.3	$1.4	$2.2
ATM fees	$2.3	$0.3	$1.3	$0.8	$0.3	$0.5	$1.2	$0.7	$0.4	$1.2
Check cashing, nonbank	$0.7	$0.1	$0.4	$0.2	$0.1	$0.2	$0.3	$0.2	$0.1	$0.4
International remittances	$14.9	$3.8	$8.6	$2.3	$1.8	$5.9	$4.5	$9.0	$2.6	$3.4
Money orders	$0.8	$0.2	$0.4	$0.2	$0.2	$0.2	$0.3	$0.3	$0.2	$0.3
Overdraft/ NSF fees	$12.1	$0.5	$5.1	$6.3	$1.4	$2.7	$7.2	$1.9	$2.2	$7.9
Prepaid cards	$6.3	$1.7	$3.3	$1.3	$0.9	$1.3	$3.5	$3.2	$1.0	$2.1
Subtotal	**$43.1**	**$7.5**	**$22.6**	**$12.5**	**$5.8**	**$12.3**	**$19.8**	**$17.6**	**$7.9**	**$17.4**
Credit services										
Auto leases	$8.4	$2.3	$4.4	$1.6	$1.4	$2.0	$4.4	$4.0	$1.8	$2.6
Auto loans – buy here, pay here (BHPH)	$9.2	$1.4	$5.0	$2.8	$4.0	$1.6	$3.6	$0.9	$3.1	$5.2
Auto loans – new	$39.1	$9.8	$22.7	$6.5	$2.9	$10.0	$22.1	$19.1	$10.1	$9.9

Auto loans – used	$74.6	$7.6	$42.9	$24.2	$9.8	$11.8	$48.0	$20.2	$20.2	$34.3
Credit cards – general purpose (revolving balance)	$165.1	$10.8	$106.2	$48.1	$15.7	$33.9	$100.2	$51.6	$51.7	$61.8
Credit cards – private label (revolving balance)	$15.4	$1.0	$8.7	$5.7	$2.8	$3.3	$8.4	$3.8	$3.9	$7.7
Credit cards – secured	$0.2	$0.0	$0.1	$0.0	$0.0	$0.1	$0.1	$0.1	$0.1	$0.1
Installment loans	$43.9	$6.7	$29.7	$7.5	$4.7	$9.1	$27.5	$19.3	$10.2	$14.4
Pawn loans	$3.8	$0.4	$1.7	$1.6	$1.0	$1.2	$1.3	$0.7	$0.8	$2.3
Payday loans	$3.0	$0.2	$1.4	$1.2	$0.8	$0.6	$1.4	$0.4	$0.8	$1.8
Refund anticipation checks and loans	$1.5	$0.3	$0.8	$0.4	$0.4	$0.3	$0.5	$0.5	$0.2	$0.7
Rent-to-own	$4.6	$0.6	$2.3	$1.6	$1.3	$1.1	$1.9	$0.5	$1.1	$2.9
Student loans – federal	$30.6	$6.5	$18.5	$5.6	$4.0	$6.9	$16.9	$16.2	$6.1	$8.3
Student loans – private	$11.6	$3.0	$6.3	$2.3	$0.5	$2.0	$8.2	$7.6	$1.5	$2.6
Title loans	$1.2	$0.2	$0.7	$0.3	$0.3	$0.2	$0.5	$0.4	$0.2	$0.5
Subtotal	**$412.3**	**$50.8**	**$251.3**	**$109.4**	**$49.7**	**$84.1**	**$245.0**	**$145.3**	**$111.8**	**$155.0**
Total	**$455.3**	**$58.2**	**$273.9**	**$121.9**	**$55.5**	**$96.4**	**$264.8**	**$162.8**	**$119.7**	**$172.5**

See Appendix II for details on calculations of spending by population and estimates of accuracy.

Table A2. Reported incidence, by household type.
Percentage of households reporting use of product/service over the last 12 months, by household type.

		Financial health			Race and ethnicity			Credit tier		
	Overall	Healthy (N = 1,978)	Coping (N = 2,536)	Vulnerable (N = 584)	Black (N = 527)	Latine (N = 638)	White (N = 3,365)	Prime (N = 3,366)	Nonprime (N = 743)	Subprime (N = 999)
Transaction and deposit services										
Account maintenance fees$^{\psi}$	18%	9%[2,3]	20%[1,3]	32%[1,2]	28%[6]	28%[6]	14%[4,5]	12%[8,9]	26%[7]	29%[7]
ATM fees$^{\psi}$	34%	23%[2,3]	36%[1,3]	54%[1,2]	40%[6]	40%[6]	33%[4,5]	26%[8,9]	40%[7,9]	51%[7,8]
Check cashing, nonbank	5%	2%[2,3]	5%[1,3]	9%[1,2]	6%[5,6]	9%[4,6]	3%[4,5]	2%[8,9]	4%[7,9]	10%[7,8]
International remittances	9%	7%[2,3]	10%[1]	10%[1]	9%[5,6]	21%[4,6]	4%[4,5]	9%	9%	8%
Money orders	13%	9%[2,3]	14%[1,3]	21%[1,2]	28%[5,6]	17%[4,6]	9%[4,5]	8%[8,9]	19%[7]	22%[7]
Overdraft/ NSF fees$^{\psi}$	15%	4%[2,3]	15%[1,3]	41%[1,2]	22%[6]	21%[6]	12%[4,5]	6%[8,9]	20%[7,9]	33%[7,8]
Prepaid cards	16%	13%[2,3]	16%[1,3]	22%[1,2]	18%[6]	18%[6]	15%[4,5]	14%[9]	15%[9]	21%[7,8]
Credit services										
Auto leases	9%	7%[3]	8%[3]	11%[1,2]	12%[6]	12%[6]	8%[4,5]	7%[8,9]	11%[7]	10%[7]
Auto loans – buy here, pay here$^{\varrho}$	3%	3%	3%	5%	11%[5,6]	4%[4]	2%[4]	1%	5%	7%
Auto loans – new	16%	18%[3]	16%[3]	9%[1,2]	8%[5,6]	20%[4,6]	16%[4,5]	19%[9]	17%[9]	8%[7,8]
Auto loans – used	19%	12%[2,3]	22%[1]	25%[1]	20%	17%[6]	21%[5]	17%[8,9]	25%[7,9]	21%[7,8]

Credit cards – general purpose (revolving balance)[θ]	49%	20%[2,3]	62%[1,3]	92%[1,2]	76%[5,6]	66%[4,6]	44%[4,5]	37%[8,9]	76%[7]	79%[7]
Credit cards – private label (revolving balance)[θ]	38%	14%[2,3]	45%[1,3]	86%[1,2]	72%[5,6]	46%[4,6]	33%[4,5]	24%[8,9]	60%[7,9]	76%[7,8]
Credit cards – secured	7%	4%[2,3]	7%[1,3]	9%[1,2]	10%[6]	9%[6]	6%[4,5]	4%[8,9]	10%[7]	10%[7]
Installment loans	9%	6%[2,3]	11%[1]	10%[1]	10%	10%	9%	8%[8]	13%[7,9]	9%[8]
Pawn loans	3%	1%[2,3]	3%[1,3]	9%[1,2]	6%[6]	6%[6]	2%[4,5]	1%[8,9]	4%[7,9]	7%[7,8]
Payday loans	2%	0%[2,3]	2%[1,3]	6%[1,2]	5%[5,6]	3%[4,6]	2%[4,5]	0%[8,9]	3%[7]	5%[7]
Refund anticipation checks and loans	3%	2%[2,3]	3%[1,3]	5%[1,2]	8%[5,6]	4%[4,6]	2%[4,5]	2%[8,9]	3%[7,9]	6%[7,8]
Rent-to-own	3%	1%[2,3]	3%[1,3]	7%[1,2]	7%[5,6]	4%[4,6]	2%[4,5]	1%[8,9]	4%[7,9]	7%[7,8]
Student loans – federal	16%	10%[2,3]	18%[1]	20%[1]	17%	21%[6]	14%[5]	15%[8]	19%[7]	16%
Student loans –private	4%	3%[3]	4%	6%[1]	2%[5,6]	4%[4]	5%[4]	5%[8]	3%[7]	4%
Title loans	2%	1%[2,3]	2%[1,3]	3%[1,2]	5%[5,6]	2%[4]	1%[4]	1%[9]	2%	3%[7]

[1] Statistically significant relative to Financially Healthy households ($p < 0.05$).
[2] Statistically significant relative to Financially Coping households ($p < 0.05$).
[3] Statistically significant relative to Financially Vulnerable households ($p < 0.05$).
[4] Statistically significant relative to Black households ($p < 0.05$).
[5] Statistically significant relative to Latine households ($p < 0.05$).
[6] Statistically significant relative to white households ($p < 0.05$).
[7] Statistically significant relative to prime households ($p < 0.05$).
[8] Statistically significant relative to nonprime households ($p < 0.05$).
[9] Statistically significant relative to subprime households ($p < 0.05$).

ψ Incidence rates for overdraft/NSF and ATM fees among households who have a checking account or had closed a checking account in the last 12 months (N = 4,915). Incidence rates for account maintenance fees among households who have a checking or savings account or had closed a checking account in the last 12 months (N = 4,957).
ϱ Among households who have a used car loan (N = 911).
θ Among households with a general purpose or private label credit card (N = 4,250).

Appendix II: Methodology

A. Summary of Research Process

Our report reflects extensive research on dozens of financial services in the United States. It is unique in its approach to estimating the market size of these services across different household characteristics by blending findings from primary and secondary research.

Our secondary analyses leverage data from credible sources and produce estimates that are consistent with other research. In most cases, figures are extrapolated from multiple data sources to arrive at a final estimate for a given product segment. Wherever possible, our analyses include partial or, in some cases, complete data for 2024. In other cases, we have applied earlier trends to estimate 2024 spending. Many 2022 and 2023 estimates have been updated to reflect new data availability.

Our primary research relies on an original survey examining usage of the products studied in this report and, where relevant, collecting supplemental information on frequency and outstanding balances. The survey also included questions on credit score, demographics, and household financial health. See Appendix II-B for more details on the primary data collection component of this study.

Total estimates of interest and/or fees rely on secondary sources, while spending proportions for the various demographic and financial health segments are estimated via primary (survey) research and overlaid onto total estimates to calculate the dollar value of spending for each segment. For product categories that are relatively small in market size (generally, total spending under $10 billion) and those with relatively little variation in the cost per user, we apply the proportion of households using a given service to estimate the share of spending driven by that population. For product categories with larger market size and more variability in cost per user, we calculate spending based on reported balance and an estimated APR based on household credit tier.

The sources are summarized in Table A4 and include our estimates of accuracy – high, medium, or low – for each product category, based on Table A3. We value feedback and partnership with stakeholders to continuously improve our analysis.

Table A3. Confidence level criteria for estimate accuracy.

	Secondary research estimates (total estimates of interest and fees)	Spending estimates by population
High	Secondary research estimates are based on widely acknowledged industry leading sources, such as federal datasets, credit bureau analyses, and public filings. Where surveys are leveraged, source methodology is disclosed.	Primary research estimates overlap with secondary research estimates, and 95% confidence intervals for subgroups do not cross zero.
Medium	Secondary research estimates are derived from credible market data. Sources disclose methodology, but with significant assumptions.	Primary research estimates are based on household incidence or do not overlap with secondary research estimates, and 95% confidence intervals for subgroups do not cross zero.
Low	Secondary research estimates required significant extrapolations and assumptions; estimates rely on pre-2019 data; and/or no source methodologies exist.	Primary research estimates do not overlap with secondary research estimates and 95% confidence intervals for subgroups cross zero. This is largely due to small sample sizes and primarily affects accuracy around spending allocated to the Financially Healthy.

Table A4. Production definitions, sources and survey measures, and estimates of accuracy.

Product	Definition	Secondary sources and notes	Accuracy of secondary estimate of interest/ fees	Survey measures used to estimate population spending	Accuracy of spending estimates by population
Transaction and deposit services					
Account maintenance fees	Monthly service fees financial institutions charge checking and/or savings account holders, including fees charged to those who don't meet certain requirements (typically a minimum balance or a minimum monthly deposit). Exclusive of overdraft/NSF fees or ATM fees.	Estimate based on Call Report data from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) Central Data Repository (2020-2024) and the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Aggregate Financial Performance Reports (FPRs) (2020-2024).	Medium	Incidence	Medium
ATM fees	Fees charged to consumer account holders for transactions carried out at an ATM, most often incurred when using ATMs outside of the account holder's bank or credit union network.	Estimate based on Call Report data from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) Central Data Repository (2020-2024) and the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Aggregate Financial Performance Reports (FPRs) (2020-2024).	Medium	Incidence, frequency	Medium

Check cashing, nonbank	A service to quickly convert checks to cash.	Revenue estimate extrapolated from Marketdata Enterprises, Inc. "Check Cashing & Money Transfer Services: A Market Analysis" (2013); average customer fees charged by small providers and franchised or co-located providers sourced from company data; 2013, 2015, 2017, 2021, and 2023 installments of the "FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households," FDIC (2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024); "How America Banks: Household Use of Banking and Financial Services," FDIC (2020); and check cashing survey usage information collected for this report (2021-2024).	Low	Incidence	Medium
International remittances	Service that transfers cash funds converted into electronic funds between two private individuals across international borders. This study includes only funds remitted from senders in the U.S. to recipients abroad and does not include account-to-account transfers.	Calculation based on the World Bank 2017 and 2021 Bilateral Remittance Matrices; World Bank estimates of remittance prices worldwide (2009-2024); and Knomad remittances inflow data (2019-2024).	Medium	Incidence	Medium
Money orders	A service that converts cash to a paper check equivalent to the stated amount of funds guaranteed by the issuing institution.	Estimate based on U.S. Postal Service Data (2009-2024); fee data from MyBankTracker.com (2020-2024); and money order purchase location data from survey data collected for this report (2020-2024).	Medium	Incidence	Medium

Overdraft/NSF fees	A fee charged for having insufficient funds in one's checking account to pay for a purchase or charge. This includes an overdraft fee charged if the bank covered the item, or an NSF fee or bounced check fee if the bank returned the item as unpaid.	Estimate based on Call Report data from the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) Central Data Repository (2023-2024); National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Aggregate Financial Performance Reports (FPRs) (2023-2024); and National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) Call Reports (2024, last accessed March 11, 2025); "Data Point: Overdraft/NSF Fee Reliance Since 2015 – Evidence from Bank Call Reports," Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (2021).	High	Incidence, frequency	Medium
Prepaid cards – government	A prepaid card used to access, manage, and spend federal government benefits including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), unemployment, Social Security, and disability benefits for all recipients who do not receive benefits by direct deposit.*	Estimate based on Federal Reserve Board's annual "Report to the Congress on Government-Administered, General-Use Prepaid Cards," (2017-2024).	Low	Incidence	Medium
Prepaid cards – general purpose reloadable (GPR)	An open-loop card that serves as an account for consumers to load, store, and spend funds electronically.	Estimate uses volume-loaded figures provided by "Prepaid Card Data Book: 11 Essential Metrics," Javelin (February 2023) cited in Investor Deck – Sidoti Micro-Cap Virtual Conference, Paysign, Inc. (August 2024) and fee estimate based on Green Dot operating revenue and gross dollar volume reported in quarterly and annual public reports (2017-2024).	Low	Incidence	

Prepaid cards – payroll	An open-loop card that serves as an account for employers to deposit employee salaries, wages, or other compensation regularly for employees to store and spend electronically.	Estimate uses volume-loaded figures provided by "Prepaid Card Data Book: 11 Essential Metrics," Javelin (February 2023) cited in Investor Deck – Sidoti Micro-Cap Virtual Conference, Paysign, Inc. (August 2024); and fee estimate based on Green Dot operating revenue and gross dollar volume reported in quarterly and annual public reports (2017-2024).	Low	Incidence	
Credit services					
Auto leases	Consumer car leases.	Calculations based on risk segment, annual lease amount and term, average monthly lease payment, and percent leased reported in "State of the Automotive Finance Market," Experian quarterly reports (2009-2024); Nada and Edmunds data on new vehicle sales and average lease fees (2009-2024); and WalletHub data on average interest rates (2013-2024).	High	Incidence	Medium
Auto loans – buy here, pay here (BHPH)	Car loans offered through in-house financing, typically with high interest rates, for which monthly or biweekly payments are due at the point of sale; often utilized by consumers who lack viable credit scores since credit checks are often not required.	Calculation based on financing market share data reported in "State of the Automotive Finance Market," Experian quarterly reports (2016-2024); "Automotive Market Trends" Experian quarterly reports (2018-2024) data on new and used vehicle sales; and National Alliance of BHPH Dealers Industry Benchmarks (2018-2021) and figures from the National Independent Automobile Dealers Association (NIADA) "BHPH Dealer Magazine" (August, 2023).	Medium	Incidence	Low
Auto loans – new	Consumer loans for new cars.	Estimate based on risk segment data from Transunion Monthly Industry Snapshots (2020-2024); and interest rate, loan volume, term, and loan amount data reported in "State of the Automotive Finance Market," Experian quarterly reports (2009-2024).	High	Incidence, balance, credit tier	Medium

Auto loans – used	Used consumer car loans (exclusive of BHPH auto loans).	Estimate for used auto loans based on risk segment data from Transunion Monthly Industry Snapshots (2020-2024); and interest rate, loan volume, term, and loan amount data reported in "State of the Automotive Finance Market," Experian quarterly reports (2009-2024).	High	Incidence, balance, credit tier	Medium
Credit cards – general purpose (revolving balance)	A card-based revolving line of credit for a credit card that can be used at multiple merchants, as opposed to a single merchant or related group of merchants. Measures interest and fees only for cardholders who carry a balance for at least one month of the year.	Estimate based on data from "The Consumer Credit Card Market" biennial reports (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 2021, 2023); "Bank Prime Loan Rate Changes" (Federal Reserve, 2022-2024); revolver data from ABA Credit Card Monitor Report (2021-2022) and Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Large Bank Credit Card and Mortgage Data (2022-2024); and bankcard balance data from monthly Equifax U.S. National Consumer Credit Trends Reports (2021-2024).	Medium	Incidence, balance, credit tier, frequency	Medium
Credit cards – private label (revolving balance)	A card-based revolving line of credit issued in partnership with a retail outlet. Includes only private label cards, which are limited to purchases made at the issuing retail partner or retailer group. Measures interest and fees only for cardholders who carry a balance for at least one month of the year.	Estimate based on data from "The Consumer Credit Card Market" biennial reports (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 2021, 2023); "Bank Prime Loan Rate Changes" (Federal Reserve, 2022-2024); revolver data from ABA Credit Card Monitor Report (2021-2022) and Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia Large Bank Credit Card and Mortgage Data (2022-2024); and monthly Equifax U.S. National Consumer Credit Trends Reports (2021-2024).	Medium	Incidence, balance, credit tier, frequency	Medium

Credit cards – secured	Credit card that is fully or partially backed by funds deposited into the account and used as collateral for the credit available; also used to build credit.	Estimate based on account volume and fee data in "The Secured Credit Card Market" (Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, 2016) and "Secured Card Market Update" (Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, May 2024); fee data from "2019 Credit Card Fee Study" (U.S. News & World Report, 2019) and Lending Tree's "2024 Secured Credit Card Report"; "CFI in Focus: Secured Credit Cards" (Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, 2019); and interest rate data from WalletHub's "Credit Card Landscape Report" (2020-2024).	Low	Incidence	Medium
Unsecured installment loans	A loan repaid over time through a set number of scheduled payments. This loan may be provided by a storefront, online lender, bank, or credit union.	Estimate based on unsecured personal loan volume data from quarterly Transunion Industry Insights Reports (2019-2024) and personal loan interest rates reported by Bankrate (2024).	Medium	Incidence, balance, credit tier	Medium
Pawn loans	A non-recourse loan with amount set and secured based on the value of items provided by the borrower as collateral.	Estimate based on publicly traded industry leaders' annual and quarterly report data (2009-2024) and IBIS World Industry Report, "Pawn Shops in the US," (September, 2024).	Medium	Incidence	Medium
Payday loans	Single-payment loan offered by nonbank lenders.	Estimate based on data from "Short-Term Lending Update: Moving Forward with Positive Momentum," John Hecht for Jefferies (2018); statements by John Hecht for Jefferies (2020); "Post-Pandemic Payday Lending," John Greenwald for Catalis (2023); Texas Credit Access Business quarterly and annual state regulator reports (2018-2024).	Low	Incidence	Low

Refund anticipation checks	Fee-based service that allows tax preparation fees to be paid from the eventual tax refund rather than at the time of preparation.	Estimate based on IRS tax return data (Tax Years 2016-2022); data reported by the National Consumer Law Center, “2021 Tax Season: Higher Costs for Vulnerable Taxpayers;” data reported by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, "Assessment of Tax Refund-Related Product" (November 2024); and select company websites.	Medium	Incidence	Medium
Refund anticipation loans	Loans secured by and repaid directly from a consumer’s tax refund. Also known as “refund advances.”			Incidence	Medium
Rent-to-own	Service that allows for the purchase of furniture, appliances, and other big-ticket household items through payments due in regular installments over a period of time. The customer does not own the rented item until all payments are complete.	Estimate based on market share and gross margin data provided in quarterly and annual public reports from industry leaders Rent-A-Center (2019-2024), Aaron’s (2019-2024), and Progressive Holdings (2024); total market revenue information sourced from Daedal Research, “The Rent-to-Own Market: Analysis by Distribution Channel, Size & Forecast with Impact Analysis of COVID-19 and Forecast up to 2029.”	Low	Incidence	Medium
Student loans – federal	Student loans (also known as government student loans) that allow students and parents/guardians to borrow money for college directly from the federal government. Includes loans made directly by the federal government and privately made loans purchased by the government.	Estimate based on data from the U.S. Department of Education Agency Financial Reports (fiscal years 2018-2024) and the Budget of the United States Government, Appendix (fiscal year 2025); revenue data from publicly traded Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) commercial lenders (2018-2024); and federal student loan location data from the U.S. Department of Education (2017-2024).	Medium	Incidence	Medium[‡]
Student loans – private	Private loans provided to individuals for the pursuit of higher education and related costs.	Estimate based on interest rate data from publicly traded industry leaders (2017-2024) and volume data from "Student Loans Owned and Securitized", Federal Reserve, 2022, and Enterval Private Student Loan Semi Annual Reports (2023-2024).	High	Incidence	Medium

Title loans	A loan secured with a vehicle in which the auto title is provided to the lender as collateral. While the majority of loan industry volume is based on auto title loans structured as installment loans, some are also structured as single-payment loans.	Estimate based on revenue data from two reports from the Center for Responsible Lending: "Payday and Car-Title Lenders Drain Nearly $8 Billion in Fees Every Year," (2019) and “Debt Trap Drives the Fee Drain: Payday and Car-Title Lenders Drain Nearly $3 Billion in Fees Every Year,” (2023); reporting on regulatory changes/quarterly and annual state regulator reports in California, Illinois, Texas, and Tennessee.	Medium	Incidence	Medium
Buy now, pay later (BNPL)	Retail payment option that enables consumers to split a purchase into smaller installments, with the first installment typically due at checkout. Only “Pay in 4” models are included in this report. Shoppers are generally promised no interest and fees – as long as payments are made on time – and can apply for the loan through a quick online process.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cryptocurrency (crypto)	Cryptocurrencies or other digital assets, such as Bitcoin or Ether.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Earned wage access (EWA)	EWA providers partner with an employer or payroll system to gain insight into earned wages and provide a means for consumers to access those wages before payday or the day funds are accessible.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Mobile payment services	A digital platform, often accessed through a mobile app, that includes an account feature allowing users to receive, send and store funds. Examples include PayPal, Venmo, and Cash App. Also known as peer-to-peer (P2P) payment services. Excludes Zelle.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* All federal government benefits not accessed through direct deposit are legally required to be provided by prepaid cards as of March 2013.
‡ Outstanding balance is not factored into spend calculations.

B. Survey Details

Table A5. Survey overview.

Population	All U.S. non-institutionalized adults at age 18 or older
Sample selection	Nationally representative respondents selected using the UAS algorithm
Language	English or Spanish
Field dates	January 8th, 2025 to February 5th, 2025
Length	Average time: 9 minutes
Margin of error	1.4%

Table A6. Selection overview.

Number of UAS panelists invited	7,150
Did not start the survey	1,900
Started but did not complete the survey	34
UAS panelists who did not participate in financial decision making	111
Total survey completes	5,216

Table A7. Sample characteristics.

Financial health[66]	Financially Healthy	32%
	Financially Coping	53%
	Financially Vulnerable	15%
Race and ethnicity	Black	12%
	Latine	17%
	White	61%
	Other[67]	7%
Credit tier	Prime	57%
	Nonprime	17%
	Subprime	26%

C. Methodology Updates

Secondary Data Analysis

- **Student loans – federal:** Our latest estimates draw primarily from the Department of Education's fiscal year 2024 budget and projected figures from the latest White House budget.
- **Credit cards – secured:** We updated our assumption about the share of secured cards charging annual fees, reflecting new data from LendingTree's 2024 Secured Credit Card Report, which finds that only about one in three cards charge an annual fee (far lower than the 83% used in past estimates.)[68]
- **Refund anticipation checks and loans (RACs and RALs):** We incorporated new estimates from the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration's (TIGTA) November 2024 Assessment of Tax Refund-Related Products, which provides usage figures for RALs and RACs for tax years 2021–2023. These TIGTA estimates replaced previous IRS and NCLC data for those years. While TIGTA's distribution of RALs vs. RACs differs from previous sources, the overall volume remains similar, so topline figures were largely unaffected.

[66] Our financial health distribution differs slightly from the Financial Health Pulse® 2024 U.S. Trends Report, which might be due to differences in survey timing and sample construction.
[67] The "Other" segment within race and ethnicity includes respondents who indicated they were American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or multiple races. We were unable to analyze these segments separately because of small sample sizes.
[68] Matt Schulz, "2024 Secured Credit Card Report," LendingTree, July 2024.

Primary Research

There have been minor changes to the survey questions for the following products without compromising year-over-year comparability:

- **Unsecured installment loans:** Changed the order of the question series to better account for households holding multiple concurrent loans. We first asked how many installment loans a household is currently carrying, followed by a question about the location where they got their only or most recent loan.
- **Pawn loans:** Changed from a question on frequency of use to a simple yes/no question about product usage.
- **Payday loans:** Split a single, multi-part question into a series of two questions (we first asked about product usage, then for respondents who indicated usage, we asked about frequency of use.)

The following 2025 FinHealth Spend survey questions were revised to improve question clarity:

- Buy now, pay later (BNPL)
- Earned wage access (EWA)
- Online bank accounts
- Mobile payment services like PayPal, Venmo, or CashApp
- Private label credit cards
- Prepaid cards
- Student loans

We also added questions in a number of areas, including:

- Checking accounts: Total number of accounts and location of accounts
- Credit cards: Types of fees incurred
- Overdraft: Location of overdraft
- Student loans: Total payment obligation and hardship

D. Race and Ethnicity Definitions

Throughout this report, we discuss findings across race and ethnicity. We define race and ethnicity using a single, mutually exclusive variable. We use this single variable due to the lack of consensus over how to categorize Latine survey respondents in addition to their racial identity. For example, there is debate over whether race and Latine ethnicity should be viewed as the same concept or treated as separate facets of an individual's identity.

In lieu of consensus, we follow the typical race and ethnicity definition conventions and treat race and ethnicity as a single variable, acknowledging the difficulty and complexity in doing so.

Respondents answer two questions that are used to determine their race and ethnicity categorization. Respondents who answer "yes" to the question, "Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?" are categorized as Latine, regardless of their answer to an additional question asking them about their race. We use the gender-neutral term "Latine" to be inclusive of people who identify as nonbinary, agender, genderqueer, or gender fluid. In addition, the term includes individuals who may not identify as Hispanic.

Respondents who do not indicate that they are Latine are categorized based on their response to the statement: “Here is a list of five race categories. Please choose all that apply.” Response options were: “White,” “Black or African American,” “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian,” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.” Individuals who select multiple races are categorized as “Multiple Races,” regardless of their specific responses. While there are inherent challenges in grouping all people that selected multiple races together, we elected to do so in the absence of a consensus on how to subdivide this group further.

We continue to keep a close eye on evolving standards on collecting race and ethnicity information from survey respondents and will adjust our approach to reflect these changes in further iterations of this research.

FINANCIAL HEALTH NETWORK

The Financial Health Network is the leading authority on financial health. We are a trusted resource for business leaders, policymakers, and innovators united in a mission to improve the financial health of their customers, employees, and communities. Through research, advisory services, measurement tools, and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, we advance awareness, understanding, and proven best practices in support of improved financial health for all.

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